

Secrets of Lasting Weight Loss *Revealed*

Take Back

- Control of
Your Body -
Inside Out

Kat Eden



NOW Katrina Ruth

Secrets of Lasting Weight Loss Revealed

Take back control of your body – Inside Out

International Amazon Best-Selling Author Katrina Ruth
(formerly Kat Eden)

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Chapter 1: Welcome

In a few moments you are going to officially embark on your journey to the new you. And this time it's the last time you'll ever have to begin that journey. 'Cause this is the real deal.

But before you get started reading this book, I need you to get hold of a blank journal. Lined or unlined, pretty or plain. Just something that you can jot some things down in along the way. Be prepared – I will be asking you to complete a few small written tasks, to track your progress, and record some of your thoughts and focus points along your journey.

No, it's not going to be lots of 'homework', just a way to further individualize your journey and ensure your success.

If you're a visual or creative person, I'd suggest making the effort to buy a beautiful journal that you'll really enjoy using. If design and color doesn't bother you, no worries, just grab the closest unused notepad. But make sure you only use it for this! No to do lists for household tasks and errands!

Now – let's get stuck into it!

1.0 Introduction and My Story

There was a time when I thought staying in great shape meant sacrificing energy, saying good-bye to a social life, feeling guilty whenever I was on holidays, letting my emotions run rampant, and even compromising my health. I fully believed that the price I had to pay to be 'lean' and flatten my belly, meant enduring a litany of problems, including –

- Constant deprivation
- Frequent fasting
- Regular dizzy spells
- Hours of repetitive cardio workouts
- Brain fog
- Lethargy
- Grumpiness and bad moods

And I know I wasn't the only one enduring all this stuff – everyone close to me had to put up with it as well!

You want to know the worst part?

I didn't care.

I was more than willing to put up with all that stuff. Anything to get that elusive but oh-so-worth-it goal of being 'in shape'.

Here's the kicker.

As admirable as my willingness to suffer for my look was, it didn't really work. I tormented myself, I guilt-tripped at every opportunity, I skipped meals, said no to dinners out, destroyed nearly every joint in my lower body with repetitive cardio exercise, and very nearly ruined my relationship with my crazy mood swings, but I still never quite got there.

I never really got the body of my dreams.

And after a while I started to believe that it wasn't really possible. I mean, I did everything I should have been doing. And then some. But it just didn't work – not as I wanted it to, and not as I expected it to.

Don't get me wrong. I did pretty well. I was certainly not severely overweight, and many people who struggle with their weight would probably have been happy to be where I was.

But they sure wouldn't have wanted to be me if they knew what was going on beneath the surface

...

- Misery
- Frustration
- Exhaustion
- Near depression as I wondered if all my hard work would ever pay off
- Not to mention a host of dubious health complaints – which I really couldn't understand given how 'well' I ate, and how much I exercised.

Sound at all familiar?

If you're sick and tired of try, try, trying to lose weight and continuously ending up back where you started or worse, then you've definitely come to the right place. I guarantee it. But before you read any further, listen up.

This book is simple to follow. It truly does hold an incredible amount of (mostly unknown or even hidden) information that you can use to successfully lose weight. But weight loss is only the beginning. You'll also improve your health, boost your energy, and take back control of your happiness, your body, your future – and your life. I realize I might seem to be going over the top in saying this. Well, you might think so anyway. But I don't think it's too much to say that knowing how to control the way you look, function and feel on a daily basis can completely revolutionize every aspect of your being.

Is it?

Anyway, what I wanted to say was this. The advice in *Secrets Of Weight Loss Revealed* is simple. But that doesn't mean it's going to be easy. There's a lot of info in here, and at some point you WILL get a little overwhelmed. Which is fine. That's all part of the journey. And the truth is that this particular journey (like anything worth striving for) is going to require sacrifice, a new way of thinking, and it even has the potential to cause you some upset, both personally and within your relationships. If there's one thing I know for sure it's that those closest to you are the hardest to convince.

Unfortunately, there are people out there who will react badly to you taking control of your body and your health. They'll see it as a threat, or as a slur on their own state of wellbeing – if even at a sub-conscious level. This is reality – and you have to be prepared to either confront or ignore those reactions (or you could just buy those folks a copy of this book).

So whenever the going gets a little tough, or you're tempted to opt out and go back to the 'easy' road, the road that looks good but typically takes you right back to where you started, remember this:

You are worth this.

You deserve the body of your dreams.

And for whatever reason, or myriad of reasons, you've ended up at a place of near desperation, but were still willing to give yourself another shot by buying this book. You can do this. In fact you will do this. Whether it takes you a week, a month or a year, or even the next decade to implement my advice – if it's really what you want – well then you ARE going to get there.

I want you to go back over that paragraph RIGHT NOW. Take out your new journal, and write it down. Either in my words, or in your own. Heck, print it out and post it all over the house if you like. But whatever you do – just believe it. Say it, know it, and feel it.

So let's get started.

You bought this book because you need to lose weight. For health reasons, for self-confidence, to help you meet a partner, to fit back into those skinny jeans, or just because.

You've decided that enough is enough. You're committed, you're determined, and you're ready. A little nervous, perhaps, but ready nonetheless.

Maybe this is your first attempt at weight loss. Maybe your struggle has been going on for years. Perhaps you only have a few pound to lose, or it could be your goal is so big it seems insurmountable.

It doesn't matter what got you here, the point is that you are here and your (new) life - and yes, your new body - starts here.

But before we really jump into it I'm going to warn you - this is a little different to most books on weight loss. And it may be harsh at times. You're not going to find pages of inspiring stories and anecdotes in this book. I won't be taking the time to wrap everything in cotton wool and make it warm and fuzzy. Nor will I be stopping (at least not every page or two) to remind you how wonderful and amazing you're going to feel when you achieve your goal. I also won't be padding things out with feel-good self-help talk.

This is a little more simple. It's about getting to the point, and getting you results. Let's start with your wish list. Take a moment to dream about how you're going to look and feel when you finally get those results you've been hanging for.

In fact, why not write down in your journal exactly WHY you want this, WHAT you're going to do when you achieve it, and WHEN you plan to start. Plus, how you're going to feel. You could even add in what you're going to DO once you release that healthy new you.

Just finish off these sentences –

I want this because ...

When I achieve my weight loss goal I'm going to . I'm going to start my (final) weight loss journey ... When I reach my goal I'm going to feel ...

I'm going to ...

This is your first piece of homework and it's an important one. In order to succeed, your motivation must come from within. This exercise is a good way of harnessing that power.

We're going to start your journey by looking at you as the individual you are. As far as I know, this is one of only a handful of weight loss books that actually investigates your unique needs. What's the point of a weight loss book that tells everyone the same strategy? It doesn't make sense. As fitness guru Paul Chek likes to say, "If you're not assessing, you're just guessing".

Chapter 2: Your Personalized Health Questionnaires

On the following pages you'll find a series of questionnaires designed to assess every aspect of your lifestyle, health and wellness. The answers to these questionnaires will form the basis of how you use the information throughout this book so be sure to be brutally honest with yourself.

2.0.1 Food and Diet

I eat fresh fruit and vegetables rather than packaged

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I drink at least 8 glasses of water each day

- _____ Yes (0)
- _____ No (4)

My fresh food purchases are organic, free range, or from the farmers market

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I drink bottled or filtered water rather than tap water

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I make sure I avoid or minimize greasy or fried fatty foods

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I am careful to avoid eating any fats, even the ones that are 'so-called' good fats

- _____ Always (4)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (0)

I consume red wine:

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (1)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (2)
- _____ Daily (3)

I consume other alcohol

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I frequently (more than three times per week) eat 'carbs' by themselves (fruit, crackers, cereal, baked goods, sweets, breads, fruit juice, pasta, noodles, cake, pastry, ice-cream, candy, chocolate)

- _____ Yes (4)
- _____ No (0)

I drink soft drinks, coffee, caffeinated tea, sweetened fruit juice

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (1)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I consume diet soft drinks or diet desserts/treats

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (1)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I drink soy milk, eat soy based snacks, or consume soy products of any kind

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-5 x per week (4)
- _____ 6-7 x per week (6)

I eat mainly low-fat or fat-reduced dairy products

- _____ Always (4)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (0)

I buy organic, free-range or hormone free meat, poultry and eggs more often than conventionally farmed

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I eat animal-based protein (meat, poultry, eggs, fish, game)

- _____ Once a week or less (6)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (4)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (2)
- _____ Daily (0)
- _____ I am vegetarian or vegan (0)

I look for grass-fed meat sources whenever possible

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I eat white grains (pasta, rice, bread) more than whole grains

- _____ Always (4)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (0)

I consume organic dairy rather than non-organic

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I eat canned fish rather than fresh fish

- _____ Always (4)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (0)

I use margarines, butter-replacement spreads, vegetable oils, or ketchup and other sauces

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I eat raw nuts rather than roasted and/or salted

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ Never (4)

I use artificial sweeteners or consume products that have them in them

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I add white table sugar to my food, tea, or coffee

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I consume protein powders, bars, or balls

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (1)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (3)
- _____ Daily (4)

I eat fast food or take-out (even the 'healthy ones')

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I eat food that came from a tin, box, dessert freezer or any type of package

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

2.0.2 Stress and Energy

My energy is:

- ☐ balanced and good throughout the whole day (0)
- ☐ all over the place! (6)
- ☐ pretty low (6)
- ☐ low in the morning and good in the afternoon/evening (4)
- ☐ great in the morning but pretty poor the rest of the day (4)

My home life causes me to feel stressed and overwhelmed

- ☐ Pretty much always (6)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Hardly ever (0)

My work (or lack of) causes me to feel stressed and overwhelmed

- ☐ Pretty much always (6)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Hardly ever (0)

I worry about money

- ☐ Pretty much always (6)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Hardly ever (0)

I really feel stressed, anxious or worried most of the day

- ☐ Pretty much always (6)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Hardly ever (0)

I am a nervous and jittery person by nature

- ☐ Yes (4)
- ☐ No (0)

I am a positive and upbeat person

- ☐ Most of the time (0)

_____ I'm really up and down (4)
_____ Hardly ever (6)

I have a short temper

_____ Pretty much always (6)
_____ Sometimes (3)
_____ Hardly ever (0)

I feel sad and lonely

_____ Pretty much always (6)
_____ Sometimes (3)
_____ Hardly ever (0)

I am on anti-depressants or any other mood stabilizer

_____ Yes (4)
_____ No (0)

My sex drive is

_____ Low or non-existent (6)
_____ Okay (3)
_____ Very good (0)

My close relationships (partner, family, friends) cause me to feel stressed and overwhelmed

_____ Pretty much always (6)
_____ Sometimes (3)
_____ Hardly ever (0)

I feel calm, happy and at peace with myself and my life even though I want to lose weight

_____ Pretty much always (0)
_____ Sometimes (3)
_____ Hardly ever (6)

I find it hard to focus; my mind feels blurry or scattered

_____ Pretty much always (6)
_____ Sometimes (3)
_____ Hardly ever (0)

I feel moody and/or anti-social

____ Pretty much always (6)

____ Sometimes (3)

____ Hardly ever (0)

I get sick (anything that affects your ability to work or perform)

____ Nearly every month it seems (6)

____ Maybe 2-4 x per year (4)

____ Once a year when it goes around (2)

____ I can't remember the last time I was sick (0)

2.0.3 Patterns of Behavior

I have a good appetite within an hour of rising

_____ Yes (0)

_____ No (4)

I pack my own lunches/work food

_____ Always, except on rare occasions (0)

_____ About half the time (3)

_____ Never or rarely (6)

I always finish what's in front of me, even when I know I've really had enough

_____ Pretty much always (6)

_____ No, I try to only eat what I am hungry for (0)

I only serve very small portions and then wait and see if I still need more

_____ Yes (0)

_____ Sometimes (3)

_____ Never (6)

I frequently (more than two days per week) eat 'extra' meals, snacks or treats that were not on my plan for the day

_____ Yes (6)

_____ No (0)

I deliberately skip meals or wait until I am ravenous to assist me in my weight loss goals

_____ Yes, often (6)

_____ Sometimes (3)

_____ No (0)

I have bingeing sessions (eating whatever you can get your hands on, quickly, with little enjoyment of the taste of the food, just because you 'have to')

_____ Never (0)

_____ Sometimes (3)

_____ Often (6)

I eat 'comfort foods' or more food when I feel emotional or upset

- ☐ Never (0)
- ☐ Occasionally (3)
- ☐ Often (6)

I keep track of calories and/or kilojoules and try to stay on a low-cal/kilojoules diet or match my calories in to calories burnt

- ☐ Yes (6)
- ☐ No (0)

I eat only the barest minimum to sustain me, and try to keep myself hungry most of the time (even if I manage to ignore the hunger)

- ☐ Never (0)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Most days (6)

I crave sweets regularly (more than two times per week)

- ☐ Yes (6)
- ☐ No (0)

I don't really mind if I have to go hours (more than five) without eating

- ☐ Are you crazy! I have to eat every few hours! (0)
- ☐ I suppose I could cope (3)
- ☐ Sure, why not? (6)

I crave savory, rich foods regularly (more than two times per week)

- ☐ Yes (6)
- ☐ No (0)

I eat pretty much the same breakfast most days

- ☐ Yes (3)
- ☐ No (0)

I skip breakfast

- ☐ Every day (6)

- ☐ About half the time (3)
- ☐ Hardly ever (0)

I eat pretty much the same lunch most days

- ☐ Yes (3)
- ☐ No (0)

I eat pretty much the same dinner most days

- ☐ Yes (3)
- ☐ No (0)

I use meal-replacement shakes or bars rather than whole food

- ☐ Every day, or most days (6)
- ☐ 2-4 times per week (3)
- ☐ Once a week or never (0)

I feel hungry at night; I need a big dinner plus snacks or desserts (even healthy ones)

- ☐ Always (0)
- ☐ Some of the time (3)
- ☐ No, not really (6)

I have been on a restrictive diet

- ☐ Never (0)
- ☐ Once (1)
- ☐ Two or three times (2)
- ☐ Four-six times (4)
- ☐ I'm pretty much always dieting (6)

I use caffeine, energy drinks, or other stimulants

- ☐ Once a week or less (0)
- ☐ 2-3 days per week, once or twice per day (2)
- ☐ 4-6 days per week, once or twice per day (4)
- ☐ Every day, often more than twice per day (6)

2.0.4 Motivation and Self-belief

I feel positive about my weight-loss goals; I know that I can lose weight with the right information

- _____ Of course! (0)
- _____ Sometimes (2)
- _____ I hope so (4)
- _____ I've kinda lost the faith (or never really had it) (6)

My close friends and family are very supportive

- _____ Always (0)
- _____ Sometimes (3)
- _____ Not especially (6)

I make time for my weight-loss goals pretty much every day

- _____ Yes (0)
- _____ No (4)

I am easily influenced by what others around me eat or drink

- _____ Yes (6)
- _____ Only on rare occasions (3)
- _____ No, never (0)

I believe that I have the willpower and determination to lose weight

- _____ Yes (0)
- _____ I need some help with that (3)
- _____ No (6)

I am a pretty great person and losing weight is just a goal, not who I am

- _____ You said it! (0)
- _____ Sometimes I think I'm a great person (3)
- _____ I have pretty much lost all respect for myself (6)

I will do what it takes to make this work

- _____ Definitely (0)
- _____ I hope I can – I'm going to try really hard (3)
- _____ I'll see how I go (6)

I am too busy to buy fresh food and/or prepare my own food

- _____ Yes (6)
- _____ Sometimes (3)
- _____ No, I will make time for it (0)

I am willing to re-think some of what I believe about weight loss and health, even if it means being open to doing things backward to what I always believed was right

- _____ Yes (0)
- _____ Maybe (2)
- _____ Probably not, that sounds too scary (4)

I will do this no matter what other people may say to deter or discourage me

- _____ Yes (0)
- _____ I hope I can (3)
- _____ I am easily discouraged by what people say (6)

I can break my old patterns and start making new ones that build my health and confidence as I meet my weight loss goals

- _____ For sure, that's why I'm here! (0)
- _____ It's going to be tough, but I hope so (2)
- _____ Some things I'm just stuck with, that's who I am (6)

2.0.5 Sleep Quality

I get at least 7-8 hours sleep

_____ Practically every night (0)

_____ 4-5 times per week (2)

_____ 2-3 times per week (4)

_____ Once a week (5)

_____ Never or rarely (6)

I go to bed within 60 minutes of the same time at least 6 nights of the week

_____ Yes (0)

_____ No (3)

I take medicated sleeping pills (at all)

_____ Yes (4)

_____ No (0)

I get up within 60 minutes of the same time every morning, at least 6 mornings of the week

_____ Yes (0)

_____ No (3)

I feel pretty good within 15-30 minutes of awakening

_____ Pretty much always (0)

_____ Sometimes (3)

_____ Hardly ever (6)

I wake up throughout the night and can't get back to sleep for a while

_____ Never or rarely (0)

_____ 1-2 times per week (2)

_____ 3-4 times per week or more (4)

I sweat or toss and turn regularly during my sleep

_____ Never or rarely (0)

_____ 1-2 times per week (2)

- _____ 3-4 times per week (4)
- _____ 4 times or more each week (6)

It takes me more than 20 minutes to fall asleep, more often than not

- _____ Never or rarely (0)
- _____ 1-2 times per week (2)
- _____ 3-4 times per week (4)
- _____ 4 times or more each week (6)

I do shift work or change time zones frequently

- _____ Yes (6)
- _____ No (0)

Light gets into my bedroom at night. This includes alarm clock digits, red dots.

- _____ Yes (6)
- _____ No (0)

Noise gets into my bedroom at night

- _____ Yes (6)
- _____ No (0)

I eat sweets or drink alcohol within 2 hours of bed

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

2.0.6 Digestion, Stomach Upsets and Bloating

My stomach feels bloated or swollen

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (3)
- _____ 4 times per week or more (6)

I pass at least 30cm of 'number two' each day (regardless of how many 'installments!')

- _____ Yes, or close to (except on rare occasions) (0)
- _____ No (6)

I experience diarrhea

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (3)
- _____ 4 times per week or more (6)

I get constipated

- _____ Once a week or less (0)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (3)
- _____ 4 times per week or more (6)

I burp/belch after meals

- _____ Yes (most days) (6)
- _____ Occasionally (3)
- _____ No (0)

I have gas that I can't hold in

- _____ Yes (most days) (6)
- _____ Occasionally (3)
- _____ No (0)

I seem to hold water

- _____ Yes (most days) (6)
- _____ Occasionally (3)

_____ No (0)

I experience pain in my stomach or heartburn

_____ Once a week or less (0)

_____ 2-3 x per week (3)

_____ 4 times per week or more (6)

I get a headache or dizzy spells after eating

_____ Once a week or less (0)

_____ 2-3 x per week (3)

_____ 4 times per week or more (6)

2.0.7 Lifestyle and Other Factors

Women only (prior to menopause)

I take the contraceptive pill

_____ Yes (4)

_____ No (0)

My periods comes pretty regularly (between 21 and 32 days is normal as long as it's regular)

_____ Yes, nearly always (0)

_____ Not often (6)

I experience debilitating symptoms before or during my period (to the point of taking something, or really wanting to take something, for the pain)

_____ Yes, nearly always or even half the time (6)

_____ No, hardly ever (0)

I crave sweets before or during my period

_____ Yes, nearly always (6)

_____ No, hardly ever (0)

I am really bloated before or during my period

_____ Yes, nearly always (6)

_____ No, hardly ever (0)

I am noticeable moody before or during my period

_____ Yes, nearly always (6)

_____ No, hardly ever (0)

Men and Women

I use the microwave oven

- _____ Daily (6)
- _____ A couple times each week (3)
- _____ Once a week or never (0)

I take fat-burning supplements or diet pills

- _____ Never (0)
- _____ Once a week (1)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (2)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (4)
- _____ Daily (6)

I smoke and/or take party drugs or steroids/growth hormone

- _____ Never (0)
- _____ Once a week (2)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (4)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (6)
- _____ Daily (8)

I spend time in nature

- _____ Never (8)
- _____ Once a week (6)
- _____ 2-3 x per week (3)
- _____ 4-6 x per week (1)
- _____ Daily (0)

I watch TV

- _____ Never or once a week (0)
- _____ Not every day, just if my favorite show is on, or a DVD (0)
- _____ Daily for about an hour, or less (1)
- _____ Daily for 2-3 hours (4)
- _____ Daily for more than 3 hours (8)

I exercise for at least 20 minutes

- _____ Never or once a week (8)

- _____ 2-3 times per week (3)
- _____ 4-6 times per week (1)
- _____ Every day unless a major emergency occurs (0)

I include some for of yoga, Pilates, stretching or meditation in my workout regime

- _____ Never (8)
- _____ Once a week (4)
- _____ 2-3 times per week (1)
- _____ 3 times or more per week (0)

I take time out for relaxation, reflection, to treat myself (non-food), or just to do nothing

- _____ Never (8)
- _____ 1-2 times each week (4)
- _____ 3-4 times per week (1)
- _____ Nearly every day (0)

I breathe through my mouth more than my nose (you might have to think about this one, or track it for a couple of days)

- _____ Yes (6)
- _____ No (0)

2.0.8 Mapping Your Weight Loss Journey

This is where it gets interesting – and personal! In order to determine your personalized approach to reading *Secrets of Weight Loss Revealed* you need to simply circle which area you fall into for each of the questionnaires on the chart below. After that you'll use the symbol ratings on the right-hand side to determine which order you read the chapters in. Don't be alarmed if you fall predominantly into the sad or neutral face categories. In fact – this is a good thing! After all, if you ended up with all smiley scores, then I really wouldn't know what to do to help you!

Print and use this copy. See the next chart for an example.

	Level Three	Level Two	Level One
FOOD	0 - 45	46 - 79	80+
STRESS	0 - 25	26 - 54	55+
PATTERNS	0 - 44	45 - 75	76+
MOTIVATION	0 - 24	25 – 44	45+
SLEEP	0 - 19	20 - 39	40+
DIGESTION	0 - 16	17 - 34	35+
LIFESTYLE	0 - 24	25 – 45	46+
	😊	😐	😞

Example of completed chart

	Level Three	Level Two	Level One
FOOD	0 - 45	46 - 79	80+
STRESS	0 - 25	26 - 54	55+
PATTERNS	0 - 44	45 - 75	76+
MOTIVATION	0 - 24	25 - 44	45+
SLEEP	0 - 19	20 - 39	40+
DIGESTION	0 - 16	17 - 34	35+
LIFESTYLE	0 - 24	25 - 45	46+
	😊	😐	😞

Here's how it works. I've created the above chart to reflect priority points from left to right. What does this mean? If you end up with all sad face scores, then no you're not about to die, but yes you do have a lot of room for improvement. In order to get that process started you'll first read the Food chapter, followed by Stress, Patterns, and so on. But if you only get a neutral face in the Food section, and a sad face in the Patterns section, then Patterns is where you need to start.

Still confused? To make it simple, all you need to do is to work your way from left to right, starting with any hits in the sad face row. Next, jump up to the neutral face row – again, work your way from left to right, stopping only on any hits. Finally, go to the smiley face row. Yep, you got it – work your way from left to right, stopping on any hits. Of course you may not need to spend as much time on these points, but they'll definitely still need to be addressed.

If your chart was the one I'd used in the example above, you would read

Secrets of Weight Loss Revealed in this order:

1. Introduction and Questionnaires (everyone starts here)
2. Patterns (Chapter 8, page 250)
3. Motivation (Chapter 7, page 225)
4. Digestion (Chapter 6, page 201)
5. Lifestyle (Chapter 9, page 292)
6. Food (Chapter 3, page 43)
7. Sleep (Chapter 5, page 181)
8. Stress (Chapter 4, page 147)
9. Conclusion (Chapter 10, page 322)

The sample chart also shows how many points you need in each questionnaire to 'qualify' for each category.

Once you've finished mapping your results, write down your point-by-point reading process in your journal. I've listed the page numbers above so you know exactly where to go. Good luck, and enjoy the journey!

Kat

Chapter 3: Food and Diet

Welcome to the wonderful world of food! On this stop of your journey you'll learn all about what's really good for you as an individual. You'll also discover how to create a lifelong approach to eating that allows you to enjoy food, optimize your energy and wellbeing, get rid of the cravings, say good-bye to emotional or guilt-ridden eating, and yes - finally shed those excess pounds.

Making simple yet crucial changes to the way you approach your eating can and will have a dramatic influence on your ability to control your weight. Don't get me wrong – this doesn't mean that changing your eating on its own is enough to completely re-make your body. Each part of your weight loss journey is just as important as the next. It's just that, for many people, food is one of the most powerful and important factors in weight management.

Without a solid understanding and implementation of which foods work best for you, you have next to no chance of achieving your weight loss goals. This is particularly relevant and unfair given that the general perception of what is healthy has been heavily influenced by misleading research, manipulative media, and scientific studies backed by the endless pockets of food manufacturers, and is therefore extremely inaccurate at best.

In my (well-researched) opinion, and based on the results of my practical experience with hundreds of real people, most of what you've read on the internet, seen on TV, or picked up from the latest diet books leaves out a big chunk of fact and truth. Huge.

With this in mind, before you continue reading, you need to brace yourself for a bit of a shock. I'll be asking you to think about weight loss in ways that you may never have done before. And certainly in ways not typically promoted by the weight loss diet industries. But I'd say this controversy is definitely a good thing. Wouldn't you? After all, both the weight loss and diet industries have failed to provide a true or lasting solution to the vast (no pun intended) numbers of people desperate for help. Nor have they caused a noticeable reduction in sufferers of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and all the psychological afflictions that go hand in hand. The sad truth is that these problems, along with many more health and weight related concerns, simply continue to grow with each year. It just goes to show that information overload does not a problem solve. Consider these gloomy stats:

- UCLA researchers report that diets generally do not help people lose weight and keep it off. In general, people initially lose 5 percent to 10 percent of their weight on any given diet, but then gain it back, often with some additional pounds as well. Have you ever been there?
- Researchers summed up these findings by stating that 'dieting is a consistent predictor of future weight gain'! Pretty scary, wouldn't you say? Think about it: if you diet, you are **bound to gain weight!**
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), as of end 2007, approximately 1.6 billion adults (age 15+) were overweight and at least 400 million adults were obese.

- WHO further projects that by 2015, approximately 2.3 billion adults will be overweight and more than 700 million will be obese. Don't want to be one of them? Keep reading ...

Wouldn't you say it's time for a new approach?

Before we get stuck into the details I want to share the following with you – it's just a taste of how this book is going to turn some of your current nutrition knowledge upside down. The following two lists may surprise or even shock you, but when it comes to truly correct nutrition as opposed to supposedly healthy (or even 'ok') foods, these lists are just the beginning.

As you explore the rest of this section I'll explain to you exactly what you need to know about these foods, and others that you may previously have had on the wrong side of your 'good vs. bad' lists. If the foods on the rest of this page surprise you, it's not your fault. It just means you haven't been exposed to a nutritional approach based on what your body actually needs, as opposed to what suits the current-day approach to food marketing and nutrition education.

3.0.1 Five 'Healthy' Foods Making You Fatter

1. Diet soft drinks (section
2. Whole-grains
3. Fruits
4. Natural sugars
5. Fat-free baked goods or low-fat cookies/muffins etc

3.0.2 Six Secretly Healthy Foods to Strip Body Fat

1. Saturated fats
2. Cinnamon
3. Stevia
4. 70%+ organic dark chocolate
5. Wine
6. Full-fat organic dairy

3.1 Carbohydrates and Sugars – You’ve Been Conned

Reading this chapter may force you to face the idea that everything you’ve learnt about nutrition or weight loss is incorrect. Take this, for example. I bet you’ve heard that you should avoid fat in your diet – particularly saturated fat. Not true. And I’ll tell you why. I’ll also give you the lowdown on the true evil – sugar. About how it’s found in nearly 90% of packaged and processed foods – even sandwich or deli meats. About exactly what it does to your brain, your insides, and most definitely your waistline.

Let’s start with this:

Have you ever considered how sugar is made? And why it is commonly referred to as a drug? Not surprising when you consider the following:

It really is nothing but a chemical – here’s how it’s made.

- They take the juice from the sugar cane or sugar beet, refine it, and turn it into molasses
- Next they refine the molasses and it turns into brown sugar
- They refine the brown sugar a bit more and that turns into raw sugar
- They then refine the raw sugar and it becomes a crystalline white powder.
- When people first take the white crystals they feel the effects right away. But over time they need more and more in order to get the same buzz. Without it, they feel listless and lifeless. They HAVE to have it – every day. No matter the cost.
- Over time it destroys health, ruins your metabolism, robs you of your energy, and can even kill you if you have enough of the stuff.
- We call it sugar, but some would say it’s just another dangerous drug

Now consider the process of refining another natural foodstuff:

- It also is nothing but a chemical – here’s how it’s made ...
- They take the juice from the poppy seeds, refine it, and turn it into opium
- Next, they refine the opium and it turns into morphine
- They refine the morphine a little bit more and it becomes a crystalline white powder

- When people first take the white powder they feel the effects right away. But over time they need more and more in order to get the same buzz. Without it, they feel listless and lifeless. They HAVE to have it – every day. No matter the cost.
- Over time it destroys health, ruins your metabolism, robs you of your energy, and can even kill you.
- We call it heroin, but some would say it's just another dangerous drug

Makes you think, doesn't it?

When it comes to truths and lies about nutrition, learning the truth about what sugar does to you is a must. But we'll get back to that in a few moments. For now I want to tell you a little about one of sugar's (even more health hazardous) brothers ...

3.1.1 High Fructose Corn Syrup

Now while all the advice I've given you in this book is worthy of your full attention even I have to admit that there are some areas, which are of the utmost importance. And this is one of them. So LISTEN UP. Because this is one of the sneakiest, most underhand, and definitely most little-known reasons why you can't lose weight.

It's cheap to use, it makes you feel full fast, it's instantly addictive, and it sneaks into many foods that you probably thought were 'good for you'.

The big offender is high fructose corn syrup. HFCS for short. Here are some fast (fat) facts about this nasty food substance:

- HFCS is the main ingredient in most soft drinks
- It raises your triglyceride levels (dangerous fats)
- It sends your LDL levels through the roof (that's the bad cholesterol)
- Your body turns it to fat even quicker than what it turns sugar to fat
- HFCS is generally consumed as a liquid, which is one reason why it can be converted into fat very quickly
- This also means that it raises blood sugar levels extremely rapidly – which is why it is linked to diabetes

Think it's not affecting you? Don't drink much soft drink? Don't be so sure. HFCS consumption rose 135% from 1977 to 2001 and soft drink isn't the only offender –

HFCS is found in:

- Fruit juices (look for 100% natural)
- Many processed foods
- Breads, breakfast cereals and other grain products (it makes them look browner when baked)
- Low-fat or low-cal packaged snacks (always read labels)
- Muesli bars and breakfast bars (to give them a chewy texture)
- Yoghurts (including every variety of Yoplait)
- Salad dressings (including 'light' and 'low fat' salad dressings)
- Many breakfast cereals (including Special K)
- Ice-cream and microwaveable desserts (including many of those labeled as healthy)
- Even products with the healthy heart claims

The inclusion of dangerous and fattening substances such as HFCS in so many of our foods highlights one of my biggest gripes, which is that it's becoming increasingly harder to tell exactly what we are putting into our bodies, let alone what we should be putting into our bodies. So what to do? It's pretty simple, really. Always check out the label of the foods you're buying, or – even better – choose foods that are not packaged or processed at all.

"But surely not all packaged foods are bad?", I hear you ask.

"How about vegetables? Packaged or pre-frozen veggies are so convenient, and often the only way I'll get any at all!"

Good point. I understand that convenience is an important factor for you – a busy work life, family, friends, emails, Twitter ... it doesn't leave much time for food preparation. Throughout this book I'll be sure to offer you options for cutting corners without adversely affecting your results but at the same time I have to be honest with you from the start. When it comes to eating right, losing weight, and improving your overall wellness, the general rule is that the more labor-intensive way is the correct way. Truth hurts sometimes, but hey – that's what you're here for. And believe me, once those jeans start loosening up and you realize how great you're feeling, it will all be worth it.

Let's take a look at how this rule applies to fresh versus packaged greens.

3.1.2 Is Fresh Really Best?

Of course packaged fruit and vegetables are still a better choice than junk food, but that's not to say they're ideal. Can anything that lasts for months on your shelf really assist in building health and losing weight? The short answer is no, not really.

When it comes to being overweight there are a myriad of reasons why your body stores fat. And if you're serious about getting in shape, you'll be serious about attacking as many of those reasons as you can. When you eat a so-called healthy food, that for whatever reason is lacking in adequate nutrients, you'll find your hunger creeping up on you in no time. And your sweet tooth. This is a simple physiological truth and you just can't out-smart your physiology that easily.

True satiety (that feeling of being both full and satisfied) comes from true nutrition, which is the mix of vitamins and minerals in quality food. And if some packaged foods are lower in nutrients than their fresh-off-the-farm cousins, then it makes sense that they will not offer true satiety, doesn't it?

So why is that so many food and nutrition experts claim frozen food may even have more nutrition than fresh?

As much as manufacturers will try to convince you that frozen foods hold in the nutrients or that packaged foods are especially designed to retain freshness, I'm not convinced. Sure, there are some instances where buying fresh out-of-season produce may not provide optimal nutrition, but in an ideal kitchen, fresh food that is in season wins every time. In a moment I'll explain why. In the meantime, ask yourself whether you're choosing frozen because you truly believe it's preferable (or even ok), or

just because it's easier. Unfortunately, the convenience of packaged foods seems to often triumph over freshness, over variety, and over health.

One study I looked at showed that although 71 per cent of respondents agree that it is "important for good nutrition to get variety in your meals" and 43 per cent say that they enjoy "reading about food and new recipes", 28 percent admitted they "end up cooking what's quickest and easiest rather than what's best". Does this sound like something you can relate to?

Here's a breakdown of ideal choices when it comes to fruit and veg. I'll start with the best choices and work my way down to the 'hopefully-only-in-an-emergency' choices. Remember – I'm just providing you with the information, it's up to you how much of it you apply. Hopefully you'll realize I wouldn't be talking about it if it weren't important.

If you like your food full of nutrients, overflowing with taste, and pesticide free, then it has to be organic. Fresh organic. I know, I know, it costs more. Or so many people argue. But how do you determine cost? I know I'd rather invest the cost of some top quality foods now, that I can enjoy and savor, and that actually satisfy me, rather than 'saving' that money now, only to find myself

sick, overweight, unhappy - and forced to spend that same money (and believe me, you will) on doctors bills and prescription drugs down the track.

Wouldn't you?

Sadly, it seems not. The reality is that a very low percentage of people purchase organic food in the US, Australia and the UK. In fact, there are few countries in the world that consume even close to 10% of their food organically! International health expert Paul Chek puts it nicely when he points out the following:

"When you realize that 85% of all Americans are on at least one prescription drug, and only 100 years ago you would probably have had to walk around town all day to find someone on prescription drugs, it becomes pretty obvious that there is a link between our health and our food sources!"

Makes good sense to me.

Comedian Peter Berner put it another way in a skit mocking the current lunchbox 'fruit' craze. He joked that "we won't eat fruit unless it's beaten flat and wrapped in plastic".

Not so funny, actually, not when you consider that that's really just the start of it.

But what if you truly can't access organic fresh produce? Should you go for conventional fresh produce? Or organic food that's been frozen and packaged food? Or trek out to your local farmer's market?

The Truth About Frozen and Fresh Foods

Frozen food manufacturers will tell you their foods are higher in nutrient value than their fresh counterparts (due to being frozen immediately after picking) but I would argue otherwise. The process of freezing actually changes the molecular structure of the cells of the food. This means that it is no longer as nutritionally dense. On top of this, most frozen vegetables are partially cooked before being frozen, meaning that they end up going through a double-cooking process. If you've ever read anything about the benefits of raw foods, you'll know that every time you cook something it loses some of its nutritional value. Enzymes (vital for cell function and energy) in particular are significantly reduced if not destroyed through heat.

Keeping all that in mind, frozen food is still a better option than canned foods. Canned foods are frequently preserved with synthetic chemical substances and will absorb some of the metal or aluminum from the can. Just today I read a report of a colleague who suffered from heavy metal toxicity so extreme it left him unable to run more than 100 meters when he had once been a world-class sprinter. The source of all this metal in his body? For years he had consumed foods and beverages out of tin cans and aluminum. Once he underwent a metal detoxification, he was back to world-class times literally within days. Pretty amazing, huh?

So let's sum up:

- Wherever possible, go for fresh organic food
- Fresh produce from your local market or farmer's market is your second choice. Free range where possible.
- Next, go for fresh produce from your supermarket. In most cases, this truly should be a bit of a last resort. Here's just one reason why: I recently read how a major (and well-respected) Australian supermarket has been caught keeping its 'fresh' produce on shelves for up to a full 12 months. With sprays for color, texture, smell and even taste, it's no wonder you really wouldn't have a clue how old those foods are. And believe me, if it's going on down- under, it's happening in the US and indeed all westernized countries.
- Frozen organic foods are next
- Followed by frozen conventional foods
- Lastly – and only if you must – choose canned foods

Remember - the choices you make can and will affect your weight loss, and every little detail really does count.

I realize that sometimes it can be a little overwhelming reading about this sort of thing. You might wonder how you're ever going to reach your goal health and weight when there are so many factors to consider. And yes, for some people there are extremely complex reasons for their health or weight problems. But for many it truly is a matter of just following basic principles, and the truth is that even if you do have underlying health complaints than the advice I'm giving you in this book will still be an incredibly powerful tool to set you on the right path.

Before we leave this section, I'd like to talk about organic versus conventional produce in more detail. I know some of you probably need a little more convincing on the organic front. After all, for every pro-organic media release or study, there are a host of health and nutrition experts spouting forth that organic foods are really no different to conventional, and that it's just a big scam to make you throw your money away.

As far as I'm concerned, if there's even a chance that organic produce and animal proteins are better for your health and your weight, then you need to think twice before you dismiss organics as a fad or a fake. Your life may depend on it.

Firstly, you need to know that just because something is labeled organic does not mean it's organic. Unfortunately, there are people out there who will ride on the wave of health trends and use the word organic without having earned the legal or moral right to do so. Sad to say, they do get away with it. And I'm not just talking about throwing the word organic around. For example, did you know that food manufacturers are allowed to use the labels 'fat-free', 'low-fat', and 'natural' as part of the title of the product – even if the food itself does not meet that criteria? The word healthy is similarly misused. Food labeling laws are simply not strict enough, and if you don't think to read the nutritional panel, then in nine cases out of ten, you ARE being duped. Sure makes me angry. How about you? Thankfully nutritional panels are now legally required in the US, in Australia and as far as I know, in the UK. Always look for the words 'certified organic', along with a governing authority logo (see below). Certified organic ensures you are getting the best. According to a rule published in the US Federal Register in 1999, meat and poultry must be **certified** as 'organic' and approved by the US Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service. Certified meat should have 'no antibiotics, no growth hormones and the animals have to be fed 100% organic feed'. Similar laws now exist in Australia and the UK.

When shopping for quality organic foods, look for the following certification symbols:

In the US visit <http://organic.com.au/certify/us/>

In Australia go to http://www.organicfooddirectory.com.au/aus_cert.php

In the UK see <http://organic.com.au/certify/uk/>

Or for any other country, <http://organic.com.au/certify> and click on the country of your choice on the right-hand panel.

Hopefully now you understand the general importance of choosing certified organic foods. But here's how it relates to weight loss.

I've read a number of studies showing that organic foods have up to 56% times more nutrients (vitamins and minerals) than their conventional counterparts. Remember how I spoke about it being the nutrient density of a food that determines how quickly you fill up?

Ok, so what does this mean for you?

In my opinion, and based on clinical experience eating all organic will not only fill you up faster (more nutrients = more satisfaction), but the fact that you've truly met your nutritional needs may help you to more easily avoid junk food snacks later on in the day. Other benefits of organic food include:

- More humane treatment for animals
- Helps to produce higher nutrition soils
- Looks, tastes and feels better (definitely tastes!)
- Free of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and other toxins
- Does not dirty our water or harm marine/bird life through chemical exposure
- Food as nature intended it

Of course even once you're fully sold on the benefits of organic, it's not possible to live or eat perfectly. And even if you could, who would want to? Boring! A big part of the reason why controlling your weight and health is so important (in my mind) is that it allows you the freedom to have a cheat meal or a day off now and then, and know that your body will handle it. With that in mind, let's admit and accept that there will be times when you go out for dinner, or go for a take-away on the way home from a busy day. I don't want to ruin your enjoyment of occasions, but I do think you need to be aware of the facts on take-out foods – particularly given that many companies now market their fast-food as healthy. We need to look at how true that is and make sure you're not unwittingly sabotaging your weight-loss journey.

3.1.3 Even Healthy Take-Out Could Be Making You Fat

It's true that some take-out foods are better than others. I'll even be nice enough to list them for you in a moment.

But before I do, let me make one thing quite clear. Eating take-out food is NEVER a substitute for real cooking, despite what some busy careers or families would compel you to think after the end of yet another long day. Here's why:

- You rarely end up sticking with the 'healthier' choices you promised yourself you would before you made the order. Garlic bread, anyone?
- Even the healthy choices typically use low-quality produce. This means you don't get adequate nutrition from the food, and are unlikely to remain satisfied from the meal, or be able to resist a naughty dessert
- It makes you more likely to eat an unhealthy meal again the next day – either leftovers, or having to buy extra food out because you don't have any leftover (real) dinner to take for lunch
- Take-out portions are typically around 40-50% more food than what most people need at a meal.
- Many people automatically head for the soda to accompany take- away food meals – just another batch of empty calories

I guess the real question is whether you can have it all – in this case, both convenience and results.

Of course convenience sometimes wins out. We all have busy lives, responsibilities, work to do, and often people to care for. So it's not realistic to imagine that you can prepare the 'perfect' meal every night. Nor should you have to – even if you do have the time! Here are some take-out slimming rules to print out and keep with your favorite menus.

- McDonalds now do a range of salads and 'healthy' foods. I'd recommend a salad with protein (such as chicken or egg) added. Very easy on the sauce. And absolutely no desserts.
- Pizza Hut, Domino's or any 'standard' pizza joint is a no-no, but many smaller, independent pizza outlets will use a non-greasy thin base, and fresh ingredients. Avoid processed meats as they are toxic to your health and your weight. Choose fresh meat with fresh veg and salad. Choose goats' cheese, feta, or yogurt rather than standard pizza cheeses.

- Sushi and sashimi can be great, but avoid filling up on white rice. Try some seaweed salad (It's actually really yummy, usually with a sesame topping and extremely good for you), and raw fish or beef instead of regular sushi rolls.
- Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese or Malaysian foods are not too hard to figure out – the main catch is that many of them will use cheap oils which make you gain weight fast. If you're certain of the quality, coconut oil/milk based curries are great. Avoid laksas or soups as they are high in sugar. Anything that is meat and veg based is ok, but ask for sauce on the side and use sparingly. Avoid noodle dishes, and definitely stay away from deep-fried dishes. Naan and roti breads will clog you up faster than you can say "where did my abs go".
- If you feel like chicken, go for an independent retailer. Many of them use free-range chicken. You can order some tabouli or salad on the side. KFC and it's competitors really do not have anything to offer you. They use cheap quality foods and cheap oils. I'd rather go hungry.

Feel free to email me with your favorite take-out if I haven't covered it here. And remember that even these 'healthy' take-out options are still just the best of the evils on offer, and definitely an occasional treat rather than a weekly staple. What I hope you'll notice is that the further you continue with your weight loss journey, the more you'll consider eating take-out to be a nuisance rather than an enjoyable occasion.

Okay, enough lecturing for now - since we're already kinda talking about it, let's investigate some hard truths about processed foods – and what they're, perhaps secretly, doing to destroy your weight, your health, and even your life.

3.1.4 The Truth About Processed Foods

- In 2002, consumers spent \$174 billion on processed foods
- 90 percent of advertised foods are processed
- Scarily, 90 percent of the money Americans spend on food is on processed foods. So I guess the advertising is working.
- Over 3,000 new candies, desserts and snacks are introduced each year – and the market is showing no signs of slowing down
- In contrast, only around 300 new fruit or vegetable products are released each year
- The food industry spends over \$35 billion each year on marketing
- Processed foods are only becoming worse. In 1979 Kellogg's Special K contained 10 grams of sugar per 100 grams. Now it has 17 grams – not much different to vanilla ice cream. In the same period, the sugar per 100 grams in tomato soup has increased by double. Many processed foods have 20 percent or higher sugar content.

Think you're not too badly affected? New research shows that eating just one junk food meal – like a burger and fries, or a slab of cake with ice-cream – can irreparably damage your body. Don't throw your hands up in despair yet though - eating just one good meal will start to repair the damage.

Immediately. All the more reason to start your journey now, rather than wait till you've finished reading this book!

3.1.5 The Glycemic Index – A Much Misunderstood Topic

It's quite likely that you have a rudimentary idea of how the Glycemic Index (GI) works. If what you know is similar to most people it's that eating healthy is all about choosing 'low GI' foods. That this is the key to weight loss. Well, (as you're probably already starting to realize), it's really not that simple.

The GI compares the sugar content of different foods (predominantly carbohydrate-based) to that of pure glucose, which is rated as 100. Therefore, in theory, the closer a certain food is to 100, the more likely it would produce the same response in your body as pure glucose. This means that the higher the GI rating of a food, the higher its sugar content – or the more it will raise blood sugar and cause fat storage after eating (more on those insulin-related effects later). Basically this means these foods are more rapidly digested and absorbed. As you may already know, sweets and most baked goods score highly, but some supposedly healthy foods can also score quite high.

To give you a few examples:

Glucose	100
Mars Bar	68
Ice Cream	36
White potatoes	98
Parsnips	97
Skim Milk	32
Whole milk	34
Whole wheat bread	72
Bananas	62
Grapes	45
White rice	72
Brown rice	66
Plum	25
Cherries	23

According to followers of the GI for health, low GI foods – due to their slow digestion and absorption – produce only gradual increases in blood sugar and insulin level. This is said to assist in health, and even improve glucose and lipid levels in diabetes sufferers. Low GI foods are also said to assist in weight control through controlled appetite and delayed hunger, and may assist in reducing insulin resistance.

So just how healthy is a GI based diet?

If you follow mainstream nutrition advice you could certainly be forgiven for believing that following a low GI diet is the basis of a sound health and weight loss plan. In fact, in 1999, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recommended that people in industrialized countries base their diets on low-GI foods in order to prevent coronary heart disease,

diabetes and obesity. Furthermore, the GI was originally devised as a method for diabetics to control their insulin levels through their food choices.

As to how it fits in with your weight loss plan, well, clearly it's not as simple as eating only low GI foods and avoiding all high GI foods. So I don't want you to get too caught up in the GI index. Basically, I think that while elements of the GI can be used to guide better food choices, any method or program of weight loss that categorically classifies foods as 'good' or 'bad' is inherent problematic. I mean – can you really compare a Mars Bar (68 on the GI) with brown rice (66), or a banana (62)? Don't get me started on how many people tell me they've been told never eat bananas. And yet keep justifying a little chocolate every day! Obviously eating high GI foods that are natural (as in, from the land, not packaged under the header natural) is still a far better choice than eating 'junk' or foods of any kind, but that's still not to say it's ideal.

There are a few things you need to keep in mind as part of your understanding of the effectiveness of the Glycemic Index.

As already stated, no real food (as opposed to processed) should be inherently classified as 'good' or 'bad'. This is because different foods can have varying effects on different people. That is to say – one man's food may be another man's poison. Furthermore, different times of day, changes in your lifestyle, activity level, sleep patterns and even stress levels can require a changing need for foods. In this regard, and again, with the exception of man-made or toxic non-foods, it's important to keep an open mind before you put any food on the no-go list.

The truth is that what is important is not just the GI rating of a food, but rather how natural that food is, what you eat that food with, and what you've been doing leading up to eating that food. What do I mean by this? If you were to eat a plate full of parsnips by itself (which would be curious enough!), you would certainly experience a high blood sugar reaction. But if you eat your parsnips with some beef or lamb, perhaps a little salad with feta cheese on the side, the overall blood sugar rise caused by that meal would be significantly lower. This is because you have combined those high GI carbohydrates with some low GI fat and protein.

Another example – if you've just completed an hour of heavy weight training and you're a regular exerciser with not much excess body fat then eating high GI foods post-workout can be an excellent choice. This is not a book about exercise so I'm not going into more detail here, but I hope that at least opens your eyes to the possibility of needs changing depending on lifestyle and habit.

The key point here? Don't get caught up in numbers – if you do follow a purely low GI diet with no concern for the myriad of other factors that affect your weight, you would probably end up a very frustrated and likely still overweight person.

An understanding of the GI of foods is still relevant – particularly if you suffer from diabetes, store a lot of fat around the middle or have a history of eating a lot of sugary or processed foods. In those cases I would suggest minimizing ALL high GI foods and ensuring you add protein and fat to any

carbohydrate based meal in order to minimize the disruptive and fattening effect of high blood sugar. More on that in the protein and fat section. For now, take what you've learnt about the GI as merely one element of your newfound knowledge, rather than the basis of your diet plan.

Let's move on to a closely related topic -

3.1.6 Insulin – The Fat Storing Hormone

In the previous section, I briefly mentioned the ability of a high GI food to cause an insulin reaction leading to increased blood sugar levels. What I didn't get to is that increased blood sugar levels have the ability to **make you fat even if you don't eat any fat!** Here is an overview of how your body uses carbohydrate to store fat – yes, even though many carbohydrates do not even contain any fat!

When you eat carbohydrate foods – and I don't just mean candy bars and French fries, but even 'healthy' carbs such as whole grains and fruits – the existing presence of glucose, amino acids or fatty acids in your intestine stimulates your pancreas to release insulin.

Insulin has an effect on many of your cells, but especially those cells in your liver, muscle and fat tissue. It (insulin) tells the cells to absorb and stop breaking down the glucose, fatty acids and amino acids in your intestine. This means they will be stored in your body. The best place to store them? Yep, you guessed it. They are sent to fill out and expand your fat cells.

Insulin also tells the cells to stop breaking down carbohydrate into glucose, fats into fatty acids and glycerol, and proteins into amino acids. Basically this means that the foods you eat are not being used for their required metabolic functions and are instead being stored as fat in your existing fat cells.

The really scary part is that when your current fat cells fill up, your body will produce new ones! And, as far as we know, **once your body has produced a fat cell, it will never go away.**

As you may be aware, one of the most important jobs of insulin is to cause a rise in your blood sugar. Of course, this is not all bad. Some of the blood sugar goes into your cells in order to provide energy for living, and some is used to increase glycogen (energy) storage. However, unless you are a super (elite athlete or busy laborer) active person, with a fully functioning metabolism, one outcome of this is that your body will then use the sugar in your blood and cells for energy – instead of using stored fat.

Because you will generally not use all the sugar released from the carbohydrates you eat much of that stored energy will be converted into fat stores for later use. The long and short of it is that unused energy is fat.

This fat is stored in your adipose (a type of fatty tissue) cells. And guess what? Unless you cut waaay back on the carbs or up your exercise to a crazy level for the short-term, which, incidentally, will only make you gain MORE weight in the long-term – well, it's just gonna stay there. Keeping you fat. And that's not all -

If you think about it, this means that not only are you storing more fat when you eat excess carbohydrate, you're also not releasing stored fat. And weight gain isn't the only outcome of this constant insulin release. High levels of insulin can also lead to:

- Diabetes
- Increased blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- High triglycerides (dangerous fat in your blood)
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Infertility
- Degeneration of your nervous and neurovascular systems

Still want your toast or Special K for breaky every morning?

3.1.7 Are Carbs Really Evil?

There's a good chance that you've been on your weight loss journey for some time. In fact, you may have come to think that carbohydrates are nothing but the very devil of nutrition.

"Stay away from them at all costs!" is what you've probably heard.

Well that's certainly one way of thinking. But on the other hand, perhaps you're from the pro-carb camp and feel it's best to steer clear of too much protein or fat, focusing instead on healthy fiber-rich carbohydrates like whole- grains, fruits, and vegetables.

Before we wage (another) war over the issue, let's take a look at what carbohydrates actually do in your body.

Carbohydrates are, by definition, sugar. To put it simply. they are different forms (some refined, some natural) of simple sugars that are linked together.

Your body uses carbohydrates to feed your brain. This is because your brain uses glucose (a form of sugar made from carbohydrate) as its primary energy source. In fact, the brain actually uses more than two thirds of the circulating carbohydrates in your bloodstream while you are at rest. This means that your body will continually convert carbohydrate into glucose for the brain. Of course, this could be a little tricky if you're not eating any, which explains why some people experience extreme mental fog or loss of concentration on very low-carb or no-carb diets. (An aside on this – with correct nutritional supervision and supplementation you can teach your body to adapt to using protein and fat as an energy source. In fact, many respected scientists and practitioners in this field believe that this is ideal for optimal health and physique).

Of course, not every carbohydrate you eat is necessarily used to feed your brain or for other energy forms. Especially if you are consuming vast amounts of the stuff! Anything leftover is stored as glycogen (a long string of glucose molecules), and goes first and foremost to the liver and the muscles. Glycogen stored in the liver can be used as an energy source for later (a sort of back-up), but glycogen stored in the muscles is there to stay.

I hope I'm not getting too technical for you. There's still a little to explain, and this is truly vital stuff. If you don't understand, it's a lot harder to implement change.

So –

When you eat too many carbohydrates for your body, you basically run out of room to store all the glycogen that has been created. This doesn't actually take that long. An average person can store about 300 to 400 grams of carbs in their muscles, but only about 60 to 90 grams of carbs in their liver – roughly two cups of cooked pasta.

Here's where it gets a little scary.

Once the liver and the muscles are full of glycogen – there is only one place left for it (and any more carbohydrates that you continue to eat) to go – your fat cells. And it's not as though it heads there as a back-up energy source. No, your body assumes that if you're eating so many carbs, then you must be working up toward a hibernation period. So your smart body just goes ahead and turns them into fat before shuttling that fat into your long-term fat cells. After all, if you're not fattened up for hibernation, you could die while you're sleeping! Unfortunately for you, hibernation never comes, but fattening time can go on for your entire lifetime. Am I getting through to you? Pretty shocking, isn't it?

If you continue to eat more carbs than your body needs, your body may even be forced to create new fat cells once the existing ones fill up. I touched on this a few pages back. There was a time when health experts believed that new fat cells could only be created during growth spurts and pregnancy, but we now know that they can be made any time they're required.

The long and short of it: even though carbohydrates themselves are fat-free, eating more carbs than you need will lead to excess fat being stored (in fact, up to half the carbs you eat may end up stored as fat). On top of this your blood glucose to rise, causing insulin to run rampant in your body (in order to try and control the blood glucose) and even more fat to be stored (remember fat storage is one of the main jobs of insulin)

Just to make things worse, all that insulin running around your system will ensure that your body does not release any stored fat for energy.

3.1.8 A Few Additional Points on Carbohydrates

Natural carbs (plant-based, minimally processed) are always going to be a preferable option to refined. Studies have shown that diets high in refined carbohydrate release more insulin – increasing your body's fat storing ability. This includes so-called healthy foods like rice or corn thins – popular amongst dieters worldwide.

Another thing to keep in mind is that high insulin levels also suppress glucagon and growth hormone – two hormones that contribute to fat burning and muscle growth. Remember, muscle mass is a known metabolism enhancer.

Here's another study to back up what I've been saying:

Jeff Volek, Ph.D., R.D., found that there are two factors that influence the amount of fat in your blood stream (and hence in your fat stores). One of them is how much fat you eat, but the second is – you guessed it – that your body makes fat from carbohydrates.

Jeff says: "The carbs you eat (particularly starches and sugar) are absorbed into your bloodstream as sugar. As your carbohydrate intake rises, so does your blood sugar. This causes your body to release the hormone insulin. Insulin's job is to return your blood sugar to normal, but it also signals your body to store fat. As a result, your liver starts converting excess blood sugar to triglycerides, or fat."

To add insult to injury, insulin also causes hunger and food cravings – usually for sweets. This is due to the rise and subsequent drop in blood sugar levels. It's pretty tough to avoid the cycle as not eating usually leads to shakiness, moodiness and fatigue. It's a fat storing pattern that's basically impossible to break.

The good news is that in order to optimize weight loss, you don't have to avoid these foods altogether. Rather, it's about combining them with other foods that act to bring down the overall insulin-releasing-ability of the meal, and thus determine the way your body reacts.

I mentioned glucagon earlier. Just as your body uses excess insulin to store body fat, it uses high levels of glucagon to burn body fat. With this in mind, clearly we want to optimize levels of glucagon in your body.

3.1.9 The Importance of Glucagon For Fat Burning

Glucagon is produced by your pancreas in order to break down proteins. It's main job is to stabilize your blood sugar levels by releasing stored body fat for energy. What this means is that when you eat protein, your body releases glucagon. When you eat carbohydrates, your body releases insulin.

Of course, like anything worth striving for, it isn't really that simple.

Eating some carbohydrates – or combining them into a balanced meal with the correct protein and fat – will mean that you don't release excess insulin. In fact, if you eat smart, including the right carbs in your diet can mean you actually burn fat. Just as eating vast amounts of protein, or a protein-only diet can cause you to gain weight, despite the fact that much of what I'll teach you centers on adequate protein intake. But it's important to remember that eating too much of anything can cause insulin to be released and therefore fat to be stored.

Don't feel alarmed if I'm confusing you. I'm about to make it real simple.

The summary of what you've just learned should make you appreciate that your body can store fat just from eating fruits and vegetables, or indeed any 'healthy' carbohydrate when consumed to excess or repeatedly without fat and protein. You'll now realize that so-called healthy diets of only fruit for breakfast, or only steamed veggies for dinner, are actually a guaranteed ticket to a fat belly. No wonder they never worked for you (or anyone) in the long-term!

But before you clean out your crisper, and throw out all that fresh food, please don't misunderstand. I'm not saying fruit and veg aren't good for you! Just that you need to pay attention to how they're included in your diet.

Remember, when you eat a diet high in fruit and veg but low in meat and fat, you continue to put your body into a state of energy (fat) storing.

Some of you will want to know why this is the case. The simple answer is that our bodies have not evolved as fast as our civilization has. In days gone by, we were forced to rely on the land for our food, and the changing seasons dictated what we could eat. Carbohydrates such as grains, fruits, and vegetables, were only readily available just before and during summer.

Traditionally this was the time to eat as much carbs as possible. Why? Well – think about it. If your body couldn't access these foods in winter, it needed to stock up on them in summer in order to create fat stores for your survival. Therefore, a diet high in grains, fruits, and vegetables lead directly to a fat belly. And still does.

One of the biggest problems of living in the age of 'I want it so I'll have it', is that the carbs never run out. The shop is always open. And so is the pantry in most cases. It's always 'summer'. Always time to eat. Always time to store fat.

Get the picture? It's not a pretty one, is it?

With all that in mind, let's start to take a look at some of the carbohydrate choices that are ideal for you for weight loss. ...

3.1.10 Grains: Are They Really Good for You?

If you picked up three different diet books you could very well learn that you should:

- a) eat no grain products at all
- b) eat regular amounts of whole grains for energy, fiber, health and weight loss,

or
- c) ensure the foundation of every meal is whole grain based.

No wonder everyone is confused! From what I've observed, the entire weight loss industry is torn on this matter. And if even the experts aren't sure, then how on earth can anyone else be expected to understand what's best for their body?

When it comes to grains and weight loss, here's what I know to be absolutely, irrefutably true -

Many people overeat grain-based foods. And I'm not just talking about pasta, bread, cereals, and all the usual suspects. Grains and gluten (a protein found in wheat and many other grains) are present in many sauces (such as soy or barbeque), as well as many dressings, baked goods, desserts and even tinned foods. It's fair to say that if you lead a typical Western lifestyle, it's practically impossible to get through an entire day without grains. What's more, I'm betting that many of you wouldn't want to go without them - not only are grains prevalent everywhere, they're convenient, usually cheap, and generally quite satisfying and filling in the short term. And any niggles that you may have about suspicious post-pasta bloating are quickly pushed aside when you learn (in many cases from grain-industry funded research) that grains are a great way to sustain slow-release energy and thus feel good and lose weight.

Or are they?

If only it were that simple.

The Carbohydrate Roller-Coaster

Ever noticed how the more grain-based foods you eat, the more grain-based foods you eat, and the more grain-based foods you eat? No, I didn't just repeat myself for no reason. Think about it.

Grains are addictive. Even whole-grains. Some are not as bad as others, but they pretty much all fall into the 'why can't I stop eating this?' category of food. Earlier we spoke about the cyclical nature of the hormone insulin, how one of its roles is to store fat, and how eating carbohydrates regularly throughout the day without the accompaniment of sufficient proteins and fats can actually cause your body to convert those carbs into fat.

Guess what?

Same thing goes for grain-based carbs. In fact, grain based carbs – as compared to other sources of carbohydrate, like fruit and veg – tend to exacerbate this effect. This is because most of the breads, pastas and cereals we eat are heavily processed. And not just the white ones ...

Certainly whole grains are better than heavily refined or processed grains. And yes, in most cases, whole-meal, rye or multi-grain bread is better than white. But that's not to say whole grains are ideal. Many people are intolerant to grains without realizing it – whether it's due to existing digestive upset or from overeating grains. In fact, over 75% of westerners have scarily-high insulin levels. Long story short, this means those people should avoid or at least limit all grains – even organic or sprouted grains. Not necessarily forever, but at least for a period of several months. I'll explain this further in a moment. Not sure if you could be one of those people?

If you:

- Are overweight (even just a little)
- Have high blood pressure
- Have high cholesterol
- Have diabetes
- Eat grain-based foods on a daily basis as a meal within themselves (i.e. toast or cereal, vegetarian risotto, noodles or pastas)

Then you probably need to reduce your insulin levels. And limiting grains is a good place to start. At least in the short term. Toward the end of this segment I'll explain how to take the Grain Test in order to determine if you should cut out or cut down on the grains.

In the meantime, here's some disturbing food for thought. In the US, food labels are allowed to say something is whole grain if it has at least 51% whole grains. In Australia, the UK and other Western countries, food manufacturers may also label food as whole grain when it only contains a portion of whole grains. The rest can still be refined starch and sugar that will drive your insulin up. What this means is that you should always look for '100% whole- grain' if you must eat grains.

Despite the fact that all grains have this effect, the glycemic index is still worth paying some attention to. When it comes to grains, it's true that the whiter, fluffier, more heavily processed products will cause a faster blood- sugar spike than their darker, heavier or – well – grainier cousins. But this isn't always the case. Sourdough breads, for example, are a white bread that actually uses fermentation in its cooking process, and is therefore far easier on your digestive system. This is a better choice than standard white.

So why did I say “If you MUST eat grains”? Does this mean you would be better to avoid them altogether?

Well, I'm not going to go so far as to say that everybody should cut out grains in order to lose weight. As I hope you've learnt from the past few paragraphs, some people will have an initial need to give up grains. And if there's one thing I've learnt over the years, it's that everyone has different needs when it comes to weight loss. This means that some people can handle grains (and this goes for any food) better than others. Myself, I know that as soon as I start eating grain products (even the top quality ones), I start gaining weight. Fairly rapidly. I also feel awful. But for my Mum, she handles grains really well. They make her feel good and they don't affect her weight. But because Mum eats them regularly, I encourage her to go for the best. Minimal processing, and all organic. You see, your standard supermarket grains are not only over-processed, they're generally absolute rubbish quality. This is because they are farmed from over-used soils that are already depleted of nutrients and then – to add insult to injury – sprayed with pesticides, fungicides, and all sorts of other nasty things.

Not only do these toxins go straight to your fat cells (to keep them safely away from your organs), the lack of nutrients in the grains means that you don't feel satisfied afterwards. Guess what that means? You keep eating.

Take The Grain Test

As a race, we have eaten more grains and grain products since the advent of farming and agriculture – which was between 10 and 20 thousand years ago. Even more than this, we have increased our grain consumption since the advent of the light-bulb in the early 20th century. But unfortunately for you, your digestive system has not evolved this fast. Before factory farming, all grain was sprouted – a natural evolution from exposure to dew and rain.

Sprouted grains are higher in enzymes as well as various vitamins and nutrients, including vitamin C, C, B2, B5 and B6, with vitamin A existing in up to 8 times greater capacity.

Furthermore, phytic acid (a known digestion disturber and mineral blocker) is broken down with sprouting. Without sprouting, phytic acid is present in the bran and fiber of all grains, causing major disruption to your gut. This makes the so-called benefits of fiber from grains debatable. Oh, by the way, phytic acid is also present in the coating of nuts and seeds. What's more, it can stop you absorbing calcium, magnesium, iron, copper and zinc, and play havoc with your enzyme absorption.

Here are a few more grain facts worth knowing:

- Grains have been linked to rheumatic and arthritic conditions.
- Sprouting breaks down complex sugars which cause intestinal gas.
- It also breaks down starch and toxins including carcinogens.
- You can sprout your own grains by filling a jar one third with grain or seed, then add filtered water and fasten firmly. Soak the grains overnight and in the morning strain off the water. Rinse the grains or seeds well, pour them into a bowl and allow to sit. Rinse every few hours, or twice a day for 2-4 days. Pour away the water each time you rinse them. Store in a container in the fridge and you're good to go!

Okay, truth time. In order to determine whether you need to take a break from grains, you must take the grain test. All you need is a dash of courage and the willingness to change many of your eating habits in order to reach your weight loss goals. A bit scary, I know. But don't worry – I'm going to make it a simple process for you. The really good news is that even for those of you who don't have a noticeable response to this test, the process of following it will give your digestive system a well-earned break.

What you need to do is eliminate all grains except corn, rice, buckwheat and millet for two weeks. You may also eat quinoa, which is not actually a grain, but many people consider it so. You are gluten (most grains) intolerant if you notice your energy, mood and general wellbeing improve at all during this time. You also need to give up dairy during this time. I'll explain why in a few paragraphs. After two weeks, add back in one type of grain, and just a little bit. If within a day you notice adverse

reactions such as stomach cramping and digestive upset, or any dip in energy and moods, you are likely gluten intolerant. If you are okay, on the next day add in another grain, again just a small amount. **Important!** No adverse reactions after adding back in the first grain does not necessarily indicate no intolerance. You may have a low level anti-grain indicator, or you may have a stronger reaction to some grains compared to others. This is why it's worth gradually re-introducing each grain and taking the time to see how you react. Any negative reactions indicate an intolerance, although it may not be full-blown.

While giving up your grains, make sure you read labels on sauces and packaged foods to ensure none are sneaking in. It goes without saying (I hope) that you can't drink alcohol during this period. Keep track in your journal of how you feel and whether your weight changes during this period. At the end of two weeks, start eating grains as described above, and note your reactions. Pay close attention to every detail. If your energy drops, you become bloated, you have diarrhea or constipation, or you just don't feel good, then you should not eat grains, and if you do they will definitely cause you to stay overweight, along with exacerbating a host of other health complaints, even to the very serious such as Alzheimer's or increased chance of mental disability during pregnancy.

If re-introducing grains cause you any sort of physical, emotional or digestive upset, it's a sure sign that grains aren't for you. But that's not to say you have an innate gluten intolerance. It could simply be that the way you are currently living and functioning is causing you to be intolerant to gluten.

I recommend my clients take three full months off grains. This gives your body a chance to heal and repair, and you may well find at the end of that period that you can slowly and safely reintroduce organic whole, sprouted grains into your diet. The catch? Not only do you have to give up grains during this time, but the test will become worthless unless you also give up dairy and anything containing lactose. This is because the grains you've been eating will have irritated the lining of your gut wall and dairy will exacerbate that. You should be okay on whole organic cream as it is really a fat not a sugar (lactose), but test it out by staying clear of it during the 2-week test and then carefully re-introducing afterwards.

Even if you are lucky enough to pass the grain test, I'd still advise you to be cautious about the source of the grains that you are consuming. Keep in mind that just because you have not shown up as intolerant to grains is no invitation to freely eat them with every meal. Remember – too much of anything is still too much, regardless of how 'good' the food supposedly is. And it can often come at the cost of adequate balanced nutrition. Furthermore, quality is key.

If eating grains, my recommendation is to restrict yourself to organic, unprocessed corn, rice, buckwheat and millet. Just one type each day (no, that doesn't mean with each meal, either). If you don't sprout your grains, at the very least you must pre-soak them for 12 hours to aid digestion by breaking down the phytic acid.

Sure, this sounds like a lot of work, and I'll bet some of you are thinking I'm more than a little crazy. Demanding all these extra food preparation tasks be completed, but for the most part there is no magic simple convenient packaged food answer to weight loss success. It really all comes down to eating in the manner that our bodies have evolved toward. Everything I am telling you is purely about eating as it should be done. I'm just trying to pull you away from the nutritional lies of the past century. Remember this – everything worth doing has inevitably been done before. There are no true 'new' ways to lose weight or gain optimal health – just a myriad of 'real' ways that have been forgotten or suppressed many times over.

If you are one of the few people out there to smoothly sail through the grain test, it's not a license to freely consume processed bread, pasta, pastry, and the like. Sorry! Rather, it's an opportunity to ensure that you further maximize your health, energy, digestion – and your metabolism of course – by choosing the best grains.

Here are some ideas:

- You can make your own breakfast cereals with sprouted or soaked grains (see earlier in this segment for instructions on how to sprout your grains)
- If you are buying bread, go for sprouted whole-grain breads. Organic is best.
- Conventional pasta is heavy in pesticides and toxins. You can buy organic rice pasta or gluten-free pasta at your organic store.
- Why not vary your diet a little by trying some lesser-known grains. Millet, buckwheat, amaranth and triticale are all readily available at health food stores and will have cooking instructions on the packet. Any of these – or indeed any grain that you wouldn't normally eat – can be a pleasant change from the norm, and by varying your food you force your body to constantly adapt, thus improving your metabolic function at all levels.

3.1.11 What About Fiber?

Fiber helps slow down how fast carbohydrates break down and get into your blood stream. This is one reason why eating a whole fruit rather than just drinking the juice is preferable for stable blood sugar. Fiber is the part of the grain, fruit or vegetable that cannot be digested. It has been said to be crucial to good digestion and in preventing cancer. Note that fiber is contained in vegetables and fruits, not just grains. That's a hint!

Many people I speak to are worried that cutting back on grains will mean they're not getting enough fiber. I could happily get up on my soap box here about how most studies on grains for fiber originate – surprisingly – from food manufacturer nutritionists and scientists. But I'll try not to get unnecessarily carried away. Suffice to say – yes, foods high in fiber can act as an internal broom, charging through your colon and sweeping out the excess gunk.

So does this mean you need to eat foods labeled 'high in fiber'? Or take fiber supplements or psyllium husks with your morning meal? Well, no, actually.

The relevant thing to remember here is that healthy digestion is about eating the right foods for YOUR body, rather than a generic combination of recommended foods. Foods that you are intolerant to, or consume in excess, will irritate your digestive system, causing it to slow down and back up. This will happen regardless of their fiber content. On the other hand, foods that support good energy and leave you feeling satisfied without experiencing bloating or other adverse symptoms, will give you the cleanout you need. It may come as a surprise to you to learn that for many people, this can be done by eating more protein and fat. Over the remainder of this section you will learn how eating the right balance of proteins and fats can be just as effective, if not more so, in ensuring optimal digestion than what eating so- called fibrous foods can be. In the meantime, eat plenty of green vegetables. This will take care of your fiber intake for now.

Protein and Fat? Shouldn't I Just Focus On More Fruit and Veg?

If you read plenty of magazines, watch TV, and listen to traditional dietary advice you'll know that eating vast quantities of fruits and vegetables is as healthy as you can get, and a fantastic means of assisting in weight-loss. Right?

To a certain extent, I'd agree. And that extent is only in that many people could benefit by switching most if not all of their junk food intake to an increased intake of fruit and veg. No argument – that's gotta be better for your waistline.

But that's not to say that eating high amounts of the stuff is the way to a slimmer and happier you. In fact, just this week I read an interview with one of the stars of a popular new drama series. Part of this actor's job was to transform his 160 pound lean, muscular frame into a 195 pound bundle of flab. How did he do it? Well, to paraphrase the man himself:

"I ate nothing but pasta, bread and beer. And plenty of fruit." Whaaaat?

Beer comment aside, there is some definite truth to the idea that excess fruit (and even vegetables) can cause you to gain weight. Personally, I believe that eating too many fruit and vegetables can cause you to gain weight or to remain overweight. Let me clear now: of COURSE it is better to eat fruit and vegetables than chocolate, chips and junk food snacks. But bear with me. I'm about to explain exactly what I'm talking about, and how you can figure out the correct fruit and vegetables intake for ideal body weight.

If you recall our discussion of the Glycemic Index a few pages back you'll remember that some fruits and vegetables rate as 'high GI', meaning that they have a more abrupt and noticeable effect on your blood sugar levels, and possibly your fat storing abilities. With that in mind, you may be thinking

"Oh, I know what she means about fruit and veg making me gain weight – I should stay away from high GI fresh foods, like pineapple, or carrots. Or at least not eat entire platefuls of parsnips by themselves!"

Well, you're on the right track, but it's not actually that simple ...

Before we think of setting fire to the fresh food section of our local supermarket, let's stop and remember that eating carbohydrates – particularly the fresh ones such as fruit and vegetables - is crucial to good health as well as to weight loss.

Confused yet? Fair enough – it's a confusing topic. Particularly because there are no set rules that apply to every person. I guess the main point I want to make is that most people unwittingly abuse the good health benefits of carbohydrates like grains, and even fruits and vegetables. So how much is enough? Or too much?

When it comes to fresh produce and your weight, do you actually know:

- How much fruit and vegetable you should eat each day?
- Whether following the standard government recommendation of 5 + 2 is really right for YOU?
- If one type of fruit or veg is as good as another?
- What difference it makes where you get it from or how it's processed and packaged?

Most people haven't even thought of this stuff. And why would you? We're so used to believing that fruit and vegetables are healthy and that we **MUST** eat more, that we rarely contemplate whether there could be another option. The truth is that for many people out there just including fruit and vegetables in their diet would be a huge step. So it might seem that I'm being kind of pedantic to demand you answer all those finicky questions. But the thing with weight loss is that it's all in the details.

There are two things you **MUST** remember when it comes to fruit and veg. Firstly, they are high in sugar (even the low GI ones still have sugar – they are a carbohydrate, remember!), and your body is capable of storing them as fat. That doesn't mean it always will store them as fat, just that it can happen. Secondly, some people have a higher requirement for these and other carbohydrates, then other people.

Despite the fact that I've already stated there are 'no set rules' for how much of certain foods you need to optimize weight loss. Ok, so that's not 100% accurate. These next few rules **DO** apply to all readers – and in following them along with the other recommended advice given to you throughout the book you will gain a greater understanding of the rules that are particular to your body.

So here goes –

Try to avoid regularly eating fruit and vegetables as a snack or meal by themselves. This is particularly true for the sweeter fruits and veg. Some of the main culprits are carrots, corn, peppers, bananas, hybridized apples (this is most supermarket apples), and basically anything that tastes incredibly delightfully sweet. In general vegetables are a better choice than fruit, and green vegetables are **ALWAYS** okay.

As mentioned in the GI section, adding some protein and/or fat will result in more stable blood sugar levels and therefore reduced fat storage. If it's a main meal you're preparing, you must simply ensure that some form of animal or plant protein (not including the small trace amounts of protein found in some vegetables) is present, and ideally some quality fat such as coconut oil, olive oil or avocado. For more ideas, read on to the protein section and the fat section. Snacks are a little trickier, but easy with some planning.

Try combining your fresh fruit/veg snack with:

- A spoonful of natural yogurt
- A few raw nuts
- Some goat or sheep feta
- A soft-boiled egg
- Some natural, raw nut butter
- Some avocado with organic sea salt
- Homemade dips with a base of organic yogurt or olive oil mashed with chickpeas

Think outside the square. Sure, fruit may be convenient for eating on the run or as a regular snack, but you know what they say about everything in moderation. All of the above suggestions are great when combined with raw veggies. Try one of them as an alternative to fruit next time you feel like a snack, and I guarantee you'll feel the difference in your energy. Keep up the new habit and your waistline will show some change as well.

If you feel the need to snack on anything sweet (including sweet fruits and veg), either after your meal or in between meals, it is often a sign that you did not get the adequate balance of proteins, fats and carbohydrates at that meal or the previous one. Think about the way you eat at the moment. If you don't consume some protein and fat as part of each main meal, you are not providing your body with the tools it needs for ideal metabolic function. Craving fruit (and other sweets) is a common sign of a lack of protein and/or fat.

In my early 20's I used to compete in natural bodybuilding and body sculpting shows. Part of the preparation was a strict weight loss diet for at least 12 weeks before the show. I remember experiencing massive frustration during the first 4 weeks of one such diet because the weight simply wasn't dropping off – despite the fact that I'd eaten no junk and no starchy carbs. Instead, I'd been filling up on massive platefuls of veggies for both lunch and dinner – confident that because they were healthy I could enjoy as much as I liked. Remember, too much food is still too much food, and your body **MUST** store what it can't use. Of course eating correctly is just the start of weight loss success. Of equal importance (truly!) is adequate water intake. Dehydration causes the hormone cortisol to elevate, which results in increased fat storage.

Wow! Congratulations on making it through this massive section. What I'd like you to do now is copy out the next page into your journal, and use it to create your own action checklist based on the points we've discussed. The process of writing down these questions is preferable to just printing it out – it forces you to really face them and make a commitment to yourself as you think about what you're writing. From there, it's a simple process of going back through what you've just read and making a note of the areas you need to change.

As you answer the questions you'll notice that I'm helping you to break it down into what is easy to change, and what you may need some additional preparation for. You may even have to admit to

yourself that there are areas you're just not yet prepared to get on board with. Only put something into this section if you genuinely feel unable to make a change here. We'll be coming back to it at the end of the book.

3.1.12 Action List: Carbohydrates and Sugars

Foods I will cut out that may contain HFCS (cut out means throw out right now and don't buy again – this is where you show how serious you are)

List as many as you have in your cupboard!

Fresh foods, frozen or organic?

- What I'm doing right
- What I'm doing wrong
- What I can change immediately, today
- Preparations I need to make or shopping I need to do
- Where I plan to shop from now on (you may need to Google your local organic store or market)

My preferred take-out choices from here on out:

I am going to take the Grain Test starting on: / /

My response to the grain test:

My (new) preferred sources of fiber are ...

At the moment I just can't change ...

Other comments

3.2 Water and Other Beverages

3.2.1 How Much Water Do You Need for Weight Loss?

As adults, our bodies are between 70 and 85% percent water. Every day you lose water through activity and urination, but even through thinking, digestion, blood sugar regulation, and pretty much every function that your body performs. Water also helps regulate body temperature, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, remove waste, protect your joints, and protect/support vital organs.

If you don't replace it, guess what happens. Things slow down. Your body can't function, your brain becomes foggy, and every disc in your spine starts to tighten up as your body reserves the fluid left for your heart and other vital organs. You may experience headaches, grogginess, dry skin, and could even notice your digestion, circulation and blood pressure affected.

Know what else? Your body needs water to produce and balance your hormones. This directly affects your metabolism. Poor hormone production = a slower metabolism. It really is that simple.

I know, I know. You don't like the taste, you don't really get thirsty, or you just plain forget. I don't care. Want to lose weight. **START DRINKING WATER!**

I've seen people lose 5 pounds or more in two weeks just from upping their H2O intake. They also felt a hell of a lot better for it.

Coffee, tea, and even fruit juice (if it's sugar added) are definitely no substitute for water. This is because they rob the body of water – the sugar, toxins or caffeine require your body to take water from your muscles to flush and cleanse your system.

One survey I read showed only 21% of people drink eight or more glasses of water each day, 35% drink three or less glasses, and 9% no water at all. I recently read about a well-known DJ who drinks no water but 30 lattes each day, and up to 4 liters of Coca-Cola. And he wonders why he has a doctor on call 24 hours a day to deal with his debilitating migraines!

The same survey showed the average American drinks nearly five caffeine or alcohol drinks daily. Many people surveyed did not realize that the feeling of thirst is a delayed reaction to their body's need for water, rather than the initial onset of dehydration.

When I was young and impressionable (well, more so than I am now, at least!), a friend who worked in the fitness industry told me earnestly that having long showers could make you fat. Being the weight loss fanatic that I was, and always open to new information, I actually considered what she had to say. For about a second, and then sanity clicked in. I mean, her argument was that it seeped in through your pores, causing your fat cells to expand! Clearly, she needed some better advice on weight loss, and certainly – in case you're still wondering – avoiding water, whether it's to shower

in it or to drink it, is not a smart idea. In fact, staying adequately hydrated is one of the keys to losing body fat and keeping it off.

The funny thing is though, as much as everyone 'knows' water is good for them, and realizes they should down more of the stuff, it's actually not that simple. In fact, drinking the wrong quality of water, or getting it from incorrect sources can actually cause you to gain weight!

If you thought any old drop will do then it may be time to think again. Remember, it's all in the details. If you choose poor quality water, not only might you harm your health, but you could be consuming certain toxins and chemicals that are known to cause a myriad of health problems, including disorders of the metabolism and thus weight gain. Poor quality includes tap water with it's many chemicals including fluoride, which mimics the thyroid hormone and causes weight gain. If you're worried about your teeth stop eating crap. The best water option is filtered tap water. Even a cheap Brita filter is quite effective, although you should leave its lid off overnight in order to bring about chlorine evaporation. If you're looking for the ultimate, the wellness water filter is a well-worthwhile investment. I've had mine for nearly 5 years now, and I swear by it. Good bottled brands include Fiji, Evian and Ioli, but you do have to consider the impact of so many bottles on the environment.

3.2.2 Why Dehydration Leads To Weight Gain

The old eight glasses a day advice is pretty general. I mean really, how can that be right for a 120 pound person and also for a 200 pound person? It makes no sense. In fact, recent research on this matter came up while I was doing the final edit of this book. Kidney expert Dr Stanley Goldfarb revealed the fact that nobody knew where the 8 glasses a day advice came from, and that there was no evidence proving it to be good advice. In fact, some experts, including most Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners, will tell you that many people could be harming their health and their weight by drinking too much water and overloading their kidneys!

So what should you do? To determine exactly how much water you need, take your bodyweight in pounds and divide it by two. This gives you the amount of water (in ounces) that you need each day (based on 'average' activity). If you think in kilos, that would be your weight in kilos x 0.033 to determine how many liters you need each day. Of course this doesn't take into account the many factors that influence your changing needs, but it does provide a useful starting point.

From here there are a few additional considerations. For example, if you participate in heavy-duty exercise which causes you to sweat a lot, if you are ill, pregnant, highly stressed, if you spend most of the day in an air-conditioned office, if you fly regularly, if you drink a lot of coffee or alcohol, or consume toxic food regularly (hopefully not any more now that your journey is underway!), then you will need up to an additional 30% water.

To sum up:

1. Use the above tool to calculate your water needs
2. Avoid icy cold water as it can shock your kidneys and slow digestion
3. Avoid 'skolling' great quantities of water in one hit – try to sip regularly throughout the day
4. If you find it difficult to drink water, add some fresh fruit or lemon to a jug and let the flavor settle in

Don't Be Fooled: If It's Not Water, It's Not On!

Guess what? The sports drinks companies lied when they said drinking their products would hydrate you. That goes for all of them. No buts, no ifs. The same is true of the increasingly popular vitamin or 'health' waters.

While it's true that "just a 3% decrease in hydration can lower performance" (as Gatorade likes to say in its advertisements), this does not mean that the products attached to such warnings will provide the solution. The truth is that any drink or food that contains even the smallest amount of

caffeine, sugar, or synthetic additives (including vitamins and minerals) will NOT hydrate you, and will in fact cause your body to flush out existing fluid.

3.2.3 Why Sugared And Caffeinated Drinks Cause Weight Gain

Sugar, caffeine and indeed any synthetic substance are all toxins. Suffice to say, as far as your body is concerned, anything toxic is bad, dangerous and nasty. Your body – in it's wisdom – will try to get rid of such substances as soon as they enter your stomach and start to be digested. The best way to get rid of them is to use existing water (usually from your muscles as this is where it's most readily available) to flush the nasties through your liver and out of your body.

There's a simple and unavoidable outcome to this process: you become more dehydrated, causing a drop in energy and performance. This causes all digestive and metabolic functions to be slowed, making it harder for you to burn existing body fat. Not only that, if you partake of toxic substances regularly you will overload your liver and eventually force your body to store some of those toxins as MORE body fat!

Here's how it works:

- What your liver can't detoxify is quickly sent to your fat cells for safe- keeping – and, as you can imagine, anything that goes to your fat cells causes them to expand. And you with them.
- This overload on your liver also makes your muscles less functional (because a constant demand for water is being put upon them), leading to lowered performance and a sluggish metabolism
- If you drink these beverages daily your body is continually battling to stay hydrated, and your metabolism is under attack
- In talking about sugary drinks, I am also including fruit juice. Yes, even if it is unsweetened. You wouldn't eat 9 oranges in one sitting, so why drink the sugar from 9 oranges in a glass? To make matters worse, that glass of freshly squeezed juice has pretty much none of the fiber from the fruit! Freshly squeezed fruit and vegetable juices are an okay addition to a balanced diet (if consumed immediately after juicing), but they must be taken into account as part of your meal. All that sugar WILL have an effect on your blood sugar levels and can cause insulin to spike, sparking a fat-storing response. If you enjoy fresh juice, consider it as the carbohydrate element of a balanced meal, to be consumed in addition to some quality protein and fat, and only indulge once a week or less.
- The truth is that much of your body fat actually did NOT get there from eating fat. In fact, it's far more common for fat cells to be filled up, expanded beyond capacity, and even multiplied due to excess sugar and toxin intake, rather than from eating too much fat. You'll gain a greater understanding of this in the upcoming section on fats.

One huge problem with artificially sweetened foods and drinks is that they don't just trick you – they actually do an annoyingly good job of convincing your hormonal system that sugar just arrived. This means your body releases insulin into your bloodstream to regulate all that 'sugar'. Now I know you remember by now what insulin does! Yep – it helps store fat. On top of that, the blood sugar spike will increase your appetite and desire for sweet foods throughout the rest of the day.

I hope that makes you think twice about that skinny latte or no-fat sports drink! As with many elements to nutrition, this is one case where losing weight is really not about the calories, but much more about the effects of what you consume on your physiology and hormonal system.

And if that's not enough to convince you, consider this:

- Aside from robbing your body of water, coffee has been shown to interfere with cholesterol levels and inhibit some vitamin absorption. It has also been linked to an increased risk of stroke and rheumatoid arthritis.
- Caffeine and sugar (natural or not) stress your Sympathetic Nervous System, causing a 'fight or flight' response and releasing fat-storing stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline.
- A study by the Milk Processor Education Program found that almost half of all Americans from age 4 drink a sugary sweet drink each day.
- Nearly a quarter of all calories consumed by Westerners are in beverages
- More than a third of all added sugars consumed in the average diet are from soft drinks. The high fructose corn syrup in soft drinks is closely linked to our ever-expanding obesity epidemic. In fact, one soft drink each day adds up to a minimum of 15 pounds additional body fat each year!

3.2.4 Don't Drink and Eat

One of the principles of this book is that every little thing matters, and every small point can make a difference. If you change 10 or 20 or 100 little things, the difference to your waistline can be tremendous. This is such a thing.

When you consume fluid with your meals (small sips are okay) you slow your digestion down by creating a swimming pool effect in your belly. This makes it harder for your body to move food through the stomach and through the colon. It also makes it harder to absorb nutrition from the food.

Drinking great quantities of any liquid with your meal can leave you bloated and unsatisfied, with lowered energy and a negative effect on your body's ability to metabolize foods efficiently.

Of course when we're talking about liquids there's one area we certainly can't leave out -

3.1.5 The Effects of Alcohol on Body Fat

You'll have figured out by now that I'm not a calorie-counting sort of girl. Again and again you'll hear me say that hormonal and physiological effects are far more relevant than calories. But when it comes to analyzing the effects of an alcoholic drink, it paints a useful picture to consider the calorie content. Alcohol contains about 7-9 calories per gram. Why should that mean anything? Because for each of those calories, you receive no carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins or minerals to provide nutrition. Therefore, these are empty calories that only contribute to stored fat – your body has no use for them.

Furthermore, alcohol upsets digestion by irritating the gut wall and causing inflammation. It can mean you absorb less nutrition from the food you do eat. This leads to an increased appetite. It also increases levels of dangerous fats in the blood.

Alcohol is not a carbohydrate (although it is often served with carbohydrates such as juice or soft drink). Your body will process it before it processes food. This is one reason why alcohol is linked to slower fat burning.

I'm guessing you've already got a fair idea that regular alcohol consumption does not support weight loss. But, on the other hand, you may have heard of the benefits of – say – a glass of red wine for health and even weight loss. You've probably also heard that white spirits contain practically 0 calories, which means, in theory, that you could drink as much of them as you like (with soda or straight up), and not affect your weight.

Here is the low-down on alcohol and what it really does to your waistline. I'll start with the bad news.

Any alcohol, regardless of what it's mixed with, or of its caloric value, stimulates the Sympathetic Nervous System. This causes your body to release fat-storing hormones like cortisol. It also inhibits digestion, meaning food will move more slowly through your body.

Alcohol affects your decision-making ability and impairs the part of your brain that helps you to make smart choices. This means it's more likely (among other things) that you'll eat foods you normally would not.

Many people are intolerant to the grain-based foundation of most alcohols. You may not notice a severe reaction, but this intolerance will irritate the lining of your digestive system, causing a slowing of all metabolic functions, and the possible occurrence of Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Leaky Gut Syndrome (where colon 'matter' seeps back into your body!) or other digestive disorders.

In order for your body to process alcohol (a toxin), it takes nutrients and water from your bloodstream and uses them as a detoxification aid. This means that the good food and water you've

eaten is, to a large extent, wasted. One outcome of this will be an increased appetite over the coming day, as your body attempts to reclaim the lost nutrients.

The blood-sugar spike caused by alcohol is directly linked to fat storage in particular areas: namely your tummy, hips and thighs.

Feel like a drink tonight? Here's the 'good' news.

Good quality red or white wine can aid health as it contains the antioxidant resveratrol which combat stress and other health-destroying elements in your body. It can also assist in weight loss through the detoxification of toxic estrogens. That doesn't mean everything you just read does not apply though, so limit yourself to 1-2 standard glasses every night at most.

Preferably organic, as non-organic wine has a high level of chemicals. Moving on to another topic now ...

3.3 Diet Foods and Artificially Sweetened Foods

An 8-year University of Texas study found that artificially sweetened beverages contain many synthetic and harmful ingredients, and cause weight gain. The study goes on to say that the surprising factor was not that drinking soft drink was linked to weight gain, but that drinking diet soft drink caused greater weight gain.

“There was a 41% increase in risk of being overweight for every can or bottle of diet soft drink a person consumed each day”, said Fowler, the head of the study.

Surprised? Don't be. The outcome of this study and many others like it reflect the fact that the inherent lack of nutrition or calories in diet soft drink causes your body to panic and release stress hormones for increased fat storage, as well as sending a signal to consume more sweets and refined carbohydrates after you consume the diet drink.

This is your body's way of trying to deal with the lack of nutrition in the diet drink. People who regularly consume diet soda also tend to eat more because they believe they have saved calories by choosing a diet food product.

Artificial sweeteners in foods or in your coffee have a similar effect. The most recent study I read showed that not only did the rats in the study become listless and lethargic, but they ate more food overall when artificial sweeteners were part of their diet, and ultimately gained weight rapidly. Now I know we're not rats, but I have to say I've seen pretty much the same effects on those humans I've observed (no, not in a laboratory environment!) who consumed artificial sweeteners. And – more interestingly, I've seen them lose weight by changing this point alone. But that's not to say white table sugar is any better or that 'real' soft drinks are an okay choice in light of this information.

The Effects Of a Coca-Cola

- Within 10 minutes, 10 teaspoons of sugar hit your system. This is 100% of your recommended daily intake. If it wasn't for the added phosphoric acid diluting the flavor of all this sugar, you would vomit.
- Within 20 minutes, your blood sugar spikes and your liver responds to the burst of insulin by converting all that sugar into fat.
- Within 40 minutes you've absorbed all the caffeine. Your pupils dilate, your blood pressure rises, and your liver dumps more sugar into your blood.
- At 45 minutes, your body increases dopamine, which makes you feel good. Heroin has the same effect.
- After 60 minutes, you'll start to have a sugar crash.
- At 61 minutes you'll be reaching for something to jack you back up again. So what to do? It should be obvious, shouldn't it? Considering the effects of diet and even non-diet beverages, and the crucial importance of water as discussed earlier, I'm sure you can figure out the best choice. It's just up to you to decide what's more important – the drinks (or foods) you just have to have, or reaching your weight loss goal once and for all.

Fat and Cholesterol

3.3.1 Eat Fat to Lose Fat

I was going to ease you into it. Butter you up, so to speak. If you've never read much nutritional advice apart from the norm then this section is going to blow most of what you 'know' to be true out of the water. In fact, there's a good chance you won't believe much of what I'm about to explain, but don't worry – I'll back it up. And then some. After that it will be up to you to provide further proof by testing it out on yourself.

Now I'll bet you've heard about 'good fats', haven't you? Omega 3's, avocado, nuts and seeds. I like to use the term smart fats. Eating smart fats is an intelligent decision because it increases your metabolism, boosts brain function and mental focus, and cuts out cravings. But which fats are really the smart fats? And how much fat should you actually eat before it makes you, uh, fat?

With both of those questions the real answer is a lot more detailed than what you thought or have been taught, and that's where the shock factor comes into it. But first let's look at all the reasons to include smart fats in your daily diet.

- Smart fat fills you up. This means you need less food to be satisfied, and are also less likely to want to snack later.
- Smart fat helps your body produce the hormones that spark a good metabolism. Hormone production relies on fat and protein intake – not enough fat and protein leads to poor hormone production.
- Smart fats do NOT get stored in your fat cells. Sounds ironic, but the truth is that your body shunts good sources of fat straight to your liver for energy. So what does fill up your fat cells? Keep reading, and you'll find out!
- Even trans fats are not all bad, although originally scientists thought that they were. But recent research from the University of Alberta shows that trans vaccenic acid (VA) – a natural animal fat found in beef and dairy and a type of trans fat – can actually reduce heart disease, diabetes and obesity. The study also showed that VA could lower total cholesterol by 30 percent, LDL (bad) cholesterol by 25 percent, and triglycerides (dangerous fats) by more than 50 percent.
- Saturated fat and foods naturally high in cholesterol are the smartest of all smart fats. For real. And I'll explain exactly why if you'll just bear with me.

Making Fat Work For You

It will quite likely surprise you to learn that smart fats include foods containing saturated fat and cholesterol. In fact, these are crucial to both your health and to losing weight. The thing is, your body will use carbohydrates to make saturated fat even if you don't eat any fat. That alone is a sign that saturated fat must be important, wouldn't you say? Part of the reason your body does this is because you need fat for cell stiffness & structure, to protect your liver and vital organs, and to enhance immune function. What's more, your hormonal system cannot work efficiently without sufficient fat and cholesterol. In fact, a lack of saturated fat and good cholesterol in your diet will lower your metabolism, decrease your sex drive and contribute to bad moods and poor energy.

3.3.2 The Shocking Truth About Saturated Fat and Cholesterol

The following excerpt is taken from 'Eat Fat Lose Fat' by Dr Mary Enig and Sally Fallon. I really couldn't have said it better than this.

"If eating saturated fat caused heart disease and weight gain, then eliminating those fats should have resulted in a decline in heart disease and an increase in weight loss. But look around you. That's not what happened! While we Americans have been dutifully eliminating fat from our diet, eating low-fat foods, and avoiding saturated fats from tropical oils, butter, and red meats, obesity rates and the overall incidence of heart disease have continued to climb. The truth is that the "diet police" condemned the wrong culprit"

Pretty powerful stuff. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. In order to understand why saturated fat and cholesterol is extremely good for you and in fact the SMARTEST way to lose weight and improve your health, we have to go back to when the "diet police" started their anti-fat campaign.

It all began with a study in the early 1950's. This particular study showed that eating saturated fat in the form of animal meats and dairy was closely related to an increased chance of heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. This study, completed by one Ancel Keys, is the most famous 'health' study of all time, and is the very foundation of the entire diet-heart hypothesis. The diet-heart hypothesis is the anti-fat and cholesterol approach to nutrition that pretty much every standardized diet and nutrition program has been built on over the past 60-odd years.

But here's what they didn't tell you. A 1957 study by one of many diet-heart hypothesis critics, scientist Jacob Yerushalmy, Ph.D., pointed out that while data from the six countries Keys examined seemed to support the diet-heart hypothesis, statistics were actually available for 22 countries. And when all 22 were analyzed, the apparent link between fat consumption and heart disease disappeared. For example, the death rate from heart disease in Finland was 24 times that of Mexico, even though fat-consumption rates in the two nations were similar.

To make matters worse, Keys gave no weight to other lifestyle factors of participants in the study such as how much sugar or refined foods they ate, how sedentary or active they were, how much TV they watched, or how much stress they were under. Talk about glossing over the details!

The diet-heart hypothesis has become the basis of practically every article or study you read that tells you fat and rich protein is bad for you when it is in reality merely that – a **hypothesis** from the 1950s that's never been proved, but which was so strongly backed by political processes and biased funding, that it's not hard to figure out how that incomplete summation came into being.

In the same year of the Keys study it became government policy to recommend a low-fat diet – despite the fact that the theory had not been proven, and despite the criticism of the American Medical Association!

A recent report I read sums it up quite bluntly:

“We've spent billions of our tax dollars trying to prove the diet-heart hypothesis. Yet study after study has failed to provide definitive evidence that saturated-fat intake leads to heart disease. The most recent example is the Women's Health Initiative, the government's largest and most expensive (\$725 million) diet study yet. The results, published last year, show that a diet low in total fat and saturated fat had no impact in reducing heart-disease, obesity and stroke rates in some 20,000 women who had adhered to the regimen for an average of 8 years.”

I'm not surprised if reading this sort of thing makes you just a little bit angry and begs the question

—

WHY?!!!

Why were we told fat was bad for so long? Pretty simple, really. There is big money in grains. Huge. In fact, so much that grain manufacturers were and are willing to pay scientists to make the outcomes of different studies work in their favor.

In fact, there are estimates that over 75% of scientists are actually funded by food or drug companies. This makes it really hard for those independent researchers who are trying to get the truth out there. With little funding or support, their voice is easily lost amongst the massive marketing of their opposition.

And here's another thing to chew on – if you think about it, it's in the interests of the government to keep people sick. There's massive money in the sickness industry and drug companies have huge political power. Is it any wonder then that the 'standard' for ideal cholesterol is lowered every few years, requiring more and more people to take statins (cholesterol-lowering drugs)?

Fortunately, there are enough people out there who have cared to find out the real, conclusive, and complete truth about what saturated fat does to the body, and in the 5 or so years I've been preaching this stuff public knowledge on what's really good for you has increased dramatically. But there's still a long way to go. To find out how to learn more on this topic, see the research section at the end of the book.

3.3.3 Understanding the Different Types of Fats

This is where things get a little science-y, but it doesn't last long. And if you're serious about understanding what makes your body tick and how best to burn fat then it's well worth the read.

Saturated Fat

- Is found in animal fats and tropical oils
- Does not normally go rancid, even when heated for cooking
- Is made in your body from carbohydrates
- Constitutes at least 50% of your cell membranes, giving your cells stiffness and integrity
- Is needed for calcium to be effectively incorporated into your skeletal system
- Protects your liver from alcohol and other toxins
- Enhances your immune system
- Is needed for proper use of essential fatty acids such as Omega 3
- Is found in animal products (meat, poultry etc), coconut oil and palm oil

Monounsaturated Fats

- Tend to be liquid at room temperature
- Do not go rancid easily and can be used in cooking at moderate room temperatures
- Are found in olive oil, almonds, pecans, cashews, peanuts and avocado

Polyunsaturated Fats

- Contain linoleic acid (omega-6) and linolenic acid (omega-3) - essential because our bodies cannot produce them
- Liquid even when refrigerated
- Can change structure when heated
- Are found in vegetable oils, fish oil, eggs and walnuts

3.3.4 Proof That Animal Fat is Good for You

When I first was introduced to the notion that saturated fat was good for me I thought it was ridiculous and, health concerns aside, I was too scared to try it anyway because I was convinced I'd put on weight. Fortunately I did my research, was willing to give it a go and keep an open mind, and I haven't looked back since. Here's some of the most relevant research I found on this topic – I think you'll find it useful for putting any fears to rest.

- Palmitic and lauric acid (found in tropical fats palm and coconut oil) are known to raise total cholesterol. But here's what's rarely reported: Research shows that although both of these saturated fatty acids increase LDL ("bad") cholesterol, they raise HDL ("good") cholesterol just as much, if not more. This lowers your risk of heart disease and outweighs the so-called negative effects of increased LDL.
- According to a study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (1991 Mar;53(5):1130-3 (Human Study)) eating 2 tablespoons of medium-chain fatty acids (the kind found in coconut oil) with a meal causes your body temperature to rise after your meal. This means that coconut oil can boost metabolism, helping you to avoid the slowdown in metabolism that often occurs during dieting. I've read numerous studies proving the enhanced thermogenic (increased metabolism) effects after eating meals with both medium and long- chain triglycerides (found in most saturated fats).
- Not only this, but medium chain fatty acids are crucial to good health. In fact, hospitals regularly use fat from coconut oil to feed the very young, the critically ill and the very old.

Yet More Evidence that Animal Fat Will Make You Lean

- In a new 12-week study, University of Connecticut scientists placed overweight men and women on either a low-carb or a low-fat diet. Those who followed the low-carb diet consumed 36 grams of saturated fat per day (22 percent of total calories), which represented more than three times the amount in the low-fat diet. Low-carb dieters reduced their total bad cholesterol far greater than low-fat dieters, and also decreased their triglycerides by 51 percent, compared with a 19 percent decrease for the low-carbers. Numbers don't lie ...
- Saturated fats actually improve the production of all prostaglandins by facilitating the conversion of essential fatty acids. (Price- Pottenger Nutrition Foundation Journal 20:3). Prostaglandins are hormone like agents derived from fatty acids. They are crucial to an array of metabolic functions, such as transporting calcium, aiding in fertility, and regulating immune responses.
- Dr. Jolliffe's Anti-Coronary Club experiment, published in 1966 in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that people on a Prudent Diet of corn oil, margarine, fish, chicken and cold cereal had 8 times the deaths from heart disease than those who ate meat three times per day.

And when it comes to cholesterol, it's just more of the same ...

What you may fail to realize is that cholesterol is a key building block for all cells. Whenever there is an inflammatory process in your body, there is an elevated need for cholesterol.

Stress, alcohol, medical drugs and many food additives are all capable of causing inflammation of the gut, significantly elevating the bodies need for cholesterol and thus your cholesterol levels. So you go to the doctor and he/she tells you your cholesterol is too high and that you need medication and you should stay away from all the foods that you actually need to produce adequate cholesterol to heal the damaged cells. In that situation, how likely is it that you'd even consider looking into the potential causes of elevated cholesterol! We've become worryingly used to following doctor's orders and forgetting that we do have the capacity to think for ourselves.

The reality – that cholesterol drugs do little to lower cholesterol and actually compound the problem - is easily proven by the fact that few people if any ever maintain a normal cholesterol level upon discontinuing the drugs. The only exception is if they have also been coached on how to remove the source of inflammation from their body - which is often stress or diet-related, and would have single-handedly done the job in the first place. Let's look at just what cholesterol does in your body.

- It gives cells stiffness and stability – waterproofs them
- Is a precursor to steroid hormones and vitamin D – crucial for libido and stress management

- Acts as an antioxidant – protects against cancer
- Is needed for proper function of serotonin receptors in brain
- Low cholesterol levels have been linked to aggressive and violent behavior, depression and suicidal tendencies
- Plays a role in maintaining health of intestinal wall and good digestion
- Is crucial to your ability to break down fats
- High-serum cholesterol levels often indicates that the body needs cholesterol to protect itself from high levels of altered free-radical- containing fats
- Is found in animal products
- Is vital for function of the nervous system
- Repairs weak arteries
- Your body will raise cholesterol levels in blood if you are in need of cholesterol. According to the Weston A Price Foundation “blaming heart disease on cholesterol is like blaming a fire on the firemen who arrive to put out the flames”.

3.3.5 The Real Baddy: Trans Fat

I might have turned your world upside down on the issue of saturated fat, but I'm sure not about to do the same thing for trans fats. According to the results of a 1999 study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, a diet high in trans-fats reduced blood vessel function by 30% and lowered HDL ('good')-cholesterol levels by about one fifth, compared with a saturated-fat diet.

Trans fat has been nicknamed the phantom fat because – until very recently – the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) did not require it be listed on food labels. And this despite the fact that trans fats are found in hundreds of popular foods, particularly baked, frozen and packaged goods. Of course these sort of products list the total fat, but they make no effort to distinguish the good from the bad. And why would they? Trans fat is nasty stuff and many of us are addicted from an early age. Take a look at the details:

- Trans fats are made out of liquid vegetable oils, making them extremely cheap to manufacture and use
- Americans consume five grams per day on average – a total of 3 percent of their daily calories. This is according to a 1999 study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, and the same study goes on to point out that even tiny amounts are linked to weight gain and heart disease.
- A 1994 Harvard University study found more than twice the risk of heart attacks among those who ate trans fat, compared with those who consumed little trans fat.
- Trans fats affect blood lipids negatively. They raise LDL (bad cholesterol), and lower HDL (good cholesterol). Most people surveyed have never even heard of trans fats, let alone what they can do to their body. Had you? When polled, 90 percent of people had no idea, or thought they were good for you!
- The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has shown that during the period of rapid increase in heart disease and obesity (1920- 1960), American consumption of animal fats declined but consumption of hydrogenated and industrially processed vegetable fats (another way of saying trans fats) increased dramatically.
- As discussed previously animal fats contain many nutrients that protect against cancer and heart disease while elevated rates of cancer and heart disease are associated with consumption of large amounts of vegetable oils. (Fed Proc July 1978 37:2215)
- Trans fats as they appear in processed foods do not occur naturally in nature and in fact, chemists say the molecular structure of hydrogenated fats more closely resembles plastic than food! Think you're not eating any? You'd be surprised where it ends up. Always be sure

to read the labels of any packaged or tinned foods. Look for the word 'hydrogenated' – a sneaky way of saying trans fats.

3.3.6 So What is That Low-Fat Diet Really Doing to You?

I hope that by now you're starting to understand the benefits of eating smart fats. And it should be pretty obvious by now that a diet high in smart fats is, by definition, not a low-fat diet. In fact, a low-fat diet is the absolute WORST thing you can follow if you're trying to lose weight, and it's one of the key reasons so many people struggle for years in their battle to control their body.

One of the largest studies ever conducted on the effects of eating saturated fat and cholesterol was the Framingham study. This study showed that the people who ate the most cholesterol, ate the most saturated fat, in fact the people who ate the most calories weighed the least, were the most physically active, and also had the lowest 'bad' serum cholesterol.

And that's no isolated study we're talking about either. Another study, run in the 1960s by a Vanderbilt University scientist named George Mann, M.D., found that indigenous Masai men consumed a diet high in fat and meat (supplemented with blood from the cattle they herded), and were not only very lean, but also had some of the lowest levels of cholesterol ever measured and were virtually free of heart disease. When the group of Masai men moved city-wards and began consuming a more modern diet that was naturally lower in fats, their cholesterol skyrocketed, and they began to put on weight.

The truth is that undertaking a low-fat diet is one of the absolute worst things you can do for your weight and for your health.

Short-term Effects Of a Low-fat Diet

- Digestive disorders
- Fatigue/ low energy
- Constipation
- Headaches
- Low blood sugar levels
- Often sick
- Body will store more fat
- Grumpy

Long-term Effects Of a Low-fat Diet

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Osteoporosis
- Depression/anxiety – other psychological disorders
- Cellulite

- Allergies
- Obesity

Worrying stuff. As you can see, the information contained in this book is about far more than how to lose weight. Of course that's what we're focused on though, so let's get back to it.

Another example I'd like to share with you is that of weight loss clinician Dr Yudkin. Yudkin was sick of getting flak for treating obese clients with a low- carb approach. He also wanted to test whether a low-carb approach provided adequate nutrition, and allowed a balanced mental state. He ran a study in which one group of subjects were asked to take between 10 and 20 ounces of milk daily (about 300-600 ml), and as much meat, fish, eggs, cheese, butter, margarine, cream and leafy vegetables as they wished. The only other carbohydrates they were allowed were up to 50 additional grams per day.

Yudkin says:

"In conformity with our experience with this diet during the last 15 years, none of our subjects complained of hunger or any other ill effects; on the other hand, several volunteered statements to the effect that they had increased feeling of well-being"

The macronutrient breakdown was just over 20% protein, just over 60% fat, and just over 17% carbohydrate. The people were satisfied on 1560 calories per day from this breakdown – and according to the report still had full, if not better than normal, energy.

In another study that took basically the opposite approach, subjects were not allowed fat or protein except in extremely small amounts, but were allowed around 1560 calories per day from carbohydrate. This study is known as the Key's semi-starvation study. The subjects were starving and obsessed on food constantly. They did lose weight, but they could barely function, experienced extremely low energy and in some cases, debilitating health conditions which lasted for years afterwards.

(Any chance any of that strikes a familiar tone?)

The long and short of it is that one group had to be locked down to ensure they didn't eat more than their allocated 1560 calories; the other group voluntarily dropped their intake to 1560 calories and felt great.

As you will know, over the past 50-60 years a low fat, high carbohydrate diet has been recommended for the obese and type II diabetics. This low-fat approach is based on simple math. Fat has about twice as many calories per gram as carbohydrates and protein. No surprise, math isn't the best measure of a foods effect on the body. Biochemistry is – go figure.

In contrast to carbohydrates, eating healthy fat (not trans fat, but naturally occurring fat) has proven to be the most important method for ensuring fat loss and warding off diabetes. This is courtesy of fats inability to spike the fat storing hormone insulin and prevent us from feeding our pie hole excess calories. When you eat fat in the form of grass fed beef, seeds, nuts, avocados, coconut oil or fish, as contrary as it sounds - you will no longer suffer from unsightly belly fat.

In fact, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition recently showed that eating twice as much fat led to greater weight loss. Researchers compared two eating plans that were similar in caloric intake but vastly different in fat consumption. Obese individuals who consumed 61% fat energy for eight weeks lost 18 pounds; those consuming a mere 30% fat lost 14 pounds (they replaced the fat intake with 46% carbs).

Avoiding animal protein for weight loss reasons is a mistake. Animal protein is crucial to health and weight loss for a number of reasons. If religious or strict moral views cause you to choose vegetarianism, you must do your own research on food combining, amino acids, plant protein, and non-animal fat consumption. Otherwise you will be risking slowly creeping weight and metabolic imbalance for the rest of your life. I'd also strongly recommend hunting down the book 'The Vegetarian Myth' by Lierre Keith (a 20-year vegetarian). It's quite the eye-opener.

But enough science for now. Let's talk more about what you should be eating.

3.4 Protein Power

3.4.1 Fish

As you may have heard, fish is known to be quite high in toxins like mercury and PCB's. Your best choices are wild fish, caught fresh from the ocean, as opposed to farmed fish, which are often genetically modified, and known to be bad for your health.

Farmed fish are exposed to antibiotics, toxins and other drugs, and the farms are often located near industrial areas, which leads to likely water contamination. Not only this, but there is an absolutely abysmal ratio of omega 3:6 in factory raised fish, just as in cage eggs – as much as 1:16-30, when it should be around 1:4 tops.

The easy rule to follow is that the smaller fish are preferable, as they have had less exposure to toxins, and will also not have eaten other fish containing toxins. The bigger fish such as swordfish, shark and tuna have levels of mercury so high that eating them even once a week can be dangerously toxic. According to Paul Chek, HHP, the National Academy of Sciences estimated in 1991 that the risk of cancer to the average consumer who eats seafood can be 75 times greater than normally acceptable guidelines!

I advise my clients to avoid these fish altogether, and I'd suggest you do the same. Yes, I realize tinned tuna is extremely convenient and many people rely on it as a healthy and easy source of protein, but wouldn't you rather go to just a little more trouble and know that you're getting a true benefit?

Chek also says that when you do eat fish, you should ensure that you allow the fish to drip their juices during cooking – this will allow toxic residue to escape. Remember, toxins are typically stored in fat, so avoid the fat of the fish when at all possible. Also, keep in mind that smoked fish and meat can increase the risk of cancer. Unfortunately, when you consider all this, you really do have to treat fish as a sometimes treat rather than a health food.

3.4.2 Eggs

You may have heard eggs referred to as nature's perfect food. This is due to their fantastic and readily absorbable protein content, and their naturally occurring ratios of Omega 3 to Omega 6 – a round 1:4, which is ideal for replenishing these essential fats in our bodies. Of course, as with any food, when it comes to choosing your eggs there's natural and then there's standard, and unfortunately those have become two very different things. Cage eggs can deviate in essential fats dramatically, with Omega 3:6 ratios as out-of-whack as 1:16-30. This can create massive imbalances in your body and lead to cravings, poor satisfaction from your food, and a host of other health problems. It's just one more reason why you should go to every possible length to choose foods as close to organic as possible.

So you know that organic eggs are preferable to conventional cage eggs, but I guess the real question is should you be eating eggs at all?

While many people are still scared of eggs and ask "what about the cholesterol?" or "should I eat the yolk?", the anti-egg movement is now considered old news, and that's even from the point of view of the medical association. Eggs are once again recognized not only as one of the most complete sources of protein but also as an ideal smart fat, naturally high in lecithin, which emulsifies and makes digestible the fat in the egg. This unbeatable combination makes them a natural hunger satisfier and craving- stopper. The only catch is that an egg is a whole food within itself, and eating egg whites without their yolks makes them unrecognizable to your gut. This overly-popular habit is a common cause of digestive upset and food intolerance, not to mention the fact that by eating whites alone you'd be missing out on the metabolism enhancing benefits of the HDL (good) cholesterol and Omega-3 contained in the yolk.

If you are not intolerant to eggs, you can freely eat organic or free-range eggs daily. If you're not sure whether you may be intolerant then I'd highly suggest an 8-week no-egg diet, after which time you can re-introduce eggs and use your reaction to gauge your intolerance. It is not uncommon for people who eat regularly eat partially cooked or raw eggs, or have over-indulged in eggs in the past, to become intolerant to this perfect food.

3.4.3 Meat and Poultry

Let me open this section with a statement that I hope will give you some food for thought –

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials say that it's not uncommon for some feedlot operators to mix industrial sewage and oils into feed to reduce cost and fatten animals more quickly.

Hmm, if that's not a reason to re-consider eating supermarket or non-organic meats, then I don't know what is. As much as you'll notice me repeatedly discuss the importance of meat eating for weight loss, you're not really going to hear me talking up the conventional stuff.

It's an unfortunate fact that factory farmed animals are fed antibiotics, protein supplements, corn (a food they are not designed to eat), and even growth hormone and other drugs. This is because their cramped and unnatural living conditions cause them to become sick, but also cause them to grow quickly. Need more proof? In 1998 the USDA inspections and safety system said "unaffected carcass portions" could be passed on to consumers by cutting out lesions. They also rated many animal diseases such as cancer and infectious sores as not posing a health danger to humans – meaning that those parts of the meat affected do not need to be removed.

And it's not just cattle - factory farmed chicken is often genetically modified, and typically fed a Molotov cocktail of drugs on a daily basis, all in an effort to keep the poor unhealthy beasts alive until they can be killed off.

Organic free-range poultry and meat is another story. To be on the safe side ensure that your meat and poultry is grass-fed. By definition, this means that the animal will have been allowed space to roam in a pesticide and antibiotic free environment, and the ability to enjoy the sun and a life of good health.

This will vastly affect the quality of the end product – your food. The really good news? When you eat organic meat and poultry not only are you safe to eat the fat (as it contains no toxins), but also you actually should eat the fat, for all the reasons outlined earlier in this section.

The truth is that cows and sheep are designed to eat grass. It is only by eating grass that they will be happy, healthy animals, providing us with quality meats. Even if the grains were organic, this is still not what they are designed to eat and will cause dysfunction and imbalance in their bodies, leading to a poorer quality of meat. Furthermore, even a small amount of grain has been shown to obliterate the existence of CLA (conjugated linoleic acid – a form of essential fat which has been shown to have strong anti-cancer properties) in animal fats.

If you are not eating organic, go for free range lean cuts (to avoid toxic fat) such as flank steak or round steak. You can also choose game meat – typically a more naturally raised livestock. This would include bison, goat, rabbit, hare, venison, quail, and kangaroo.

Although you probably already have a vague idea of how eating animal protein can assist in building lean muscle and creating a lean physique, you may not realize just exactly how crucial the right protein is to weight loss?

Of course any food can make you gain weight if you eat the wrong amount, the wrong type, or even if you eat it at the wrong time, so here's the skinny on eating (the right) protein for weight loss.

3.4.4 The Skinny on Protein

We've already discussed the roles of insulin and glucagon (crucial to how you create and store fat). During protein consumption both insulin AND glucagon are elevated. This is because protein intake stimulates a small increase in insulin, in order to allow the insulin to shuttle amino acids (the building blocks of protein) into the cells just like it does sugar.

Where protein's effects on blood sugar are different to that of carbohydrates is that when protein intake runs up insulin, that same insulin will run your blood sugar too low. Hence the need for glucagon. If it weren't for glucagon secretion, eating protein would actually give you low blood sugar. And, since glucagon is also a fat mobilizing hormone, you burn more fat if glucagon is higher. More protein = more glucagon = more fat burnt. This is just one more reason the low-carb diet works so well for weight loss.

My advice is that in order to reach your ideal body shape you should eat the fat (including the rind) from beef, lamb, pork, fatty fish, chicken and game meats. However, I must stress again that I don't encourage that unless the meats are organic or biodynamic. This is because fat stores toxins, conventionally farmed animals are regularly subject to antibiotics and are also farmed on heavily pesticide-contaminated soils (if they're even let outdoors). So not only would you be consuming toxins in a concentrated form – not great for health in case you're wondering – but your body would store those toxins in your fat cells. Your body does this in order to keep the nasties away from your vital organs.

But What if You Can't or Won't Eat Meat?

When it comes to protein, the reality is that you just can't get the same amino acid and smart fat benefits from plant proteins. The purpose of this book is not to argue the issue of vegetarianism beyond saying that all my professional experience and research has convinced me many times over that we are absolutely, irrefutably designed to eat meat. Meat eating is how the human race evolved to where it is now and in my opinion it is the only way we will continue to flourish with health and vitality.

If you are vegetarian or vegan, please keep an open mind here and consider the possibility of trying a new way for a period of time. The proof, as they say, is in the pudding. If you don't eat meat for religious reasons I understand and must direct you back to the vegetable/fruit section, although I do emphasize that your results will be hampered if you don't follow this book in its entirety.

You see, based on my research and experience, animal proteins and fats are the best source available for a whole range of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients such as Coenzyme Q10 (which is needed by every muscle throughout the body including the heart muscle).

Although it's true you can find protein in plants, studies have shown that a number of plant based foods/proteins contain mineral inhibitors such as fiber or phytic acid and that these reduce the bioavailability of minerals leading to deficiency and malnutrition. On top of this, many plant sources of protein may lead to excess polyunsaturated fats in your diet. This can cause all sorts of problems, including hypothyroidism – a slowing of your metabolism and is a certain prediction of ongoing weight struggles.

You also need to know that animal proteins provide more amino acids as raw materials for your body to make neurotransmitters and ensure good internal balance.

The long and short of this is that a truly healthy vegetarian diet is not only incredibly hard to perfect (requiring a deep understanding of plant proteins, amino acid break-downs, and food combining), but will also not necessarily guarantee weight loss, even if done perfectly. Which not many people do – they just don't have the necessary understanding of proteins and food combining. I can't give you a full analysis of a 'healthy' vegetarian diet here. It's not within the realms of this book.

If you don't have a religious or strong moral reason for remaining vegetarian, I'd encourage you to strongly consider slowly incorporating animal protein into your diet. If you're vegetarian purely because you believe it will help you lose weight, then you really must reconsider, based on the evidence I put before you in this section.

Two More Things to Consider

- Clinical experience has shown me that without animal protein you'll have low energy, a low libido, and poor mental focus. This will make it pretty tough to get inspired about exercise, activity, or healthy eating.
- A lack of protein causes your body to dip into muscle for energy instead of stored fat. This means you'll lose muscle and lower your metabolism day by day. Not good!

3.4.5 The Truth About Protein Powders, Bars and Balls

Unless they are a synthetic-additive-free, grass-fed organic product then protein powders, bars and balls are counter-productive to weight loss. We all know that processed fats and carbs aren't acceptable as an everyday part of a healthy diet, so why do we think processed protein is any better?

I know you've probably seen great marketing or read case studies that tell you otherwise, but the truth is that many people lose weight initially on these products (because they're practically starving themselves), and then put it back on afterwards.

The average protein powder is just about not worth the container you buy it in. They are based on poor quality whey protein – a cheap leftover product that comes about after milk, cheese and yogurt production. In fact, dairy makers used to have a problem disposing of this cheap substance, and were known to dump it into rivers as they just couldn't get rid of the stuff. Until someone came up with the bright idea of flavoring it chocolate of course! Just so you know, the more stuff that is 'added in', the more likely you are buying a really, really cheap source of protein.

So how does it affect your weight? All the nutrients and enzymes from the milk have already been used in the production of 'real food' dairy products. This makes whey nearly nutritionally void and therefore unrecognizable to your digestive system. It will back you up, slow you down, and cause your metabolism to become sluggish. Don't believe me? Try leaving a spoon in a glass of typical brand made-up protein powder. After an hour, that thing will be standing up in many cases! Just think of what that is doing to your insides.

3.4.6 Non-Animal Proteins

Just one more point on protein – I don't want you to think I'm completely against non-animal sources of protein. Legumes, plants and sprouts – for example – are all great sources of non-animal protein that even the most avid organic meat-eater can include for variety of taste and nutrients. So get out there and get creative with a variety of proteins, just keep the focus on the animal proteins!

One reason to opt for variety is the risk of food intolerance, which is caused by over-exposure to a certain food or foods. You can minimize your chances by rotating your protein on a four-day cycle. A cycle just means that if you eat protein 'a' during a given 24-hour period, you don't eat it again until five days later at the earliest. Eating this way is simple because you can just prepare big meals and use leftovers, and it's good for you as it will also reduce overexposure to (the same) toxins and chemicals in your food.

3.5 Dairy and Soy

3.5.1 What Place Does Dairy Have In A Healthy Lifestyle?

A study (Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 2005 Jun;159(6):543-550) that followed 12,829 children ages 9 to 14 years found that weight gain was associated with drinking reduced-fat milk but that the actual fat in dairy was not associated with weight gain.

So how can this be? Of course we've all been told for years how important dairy is for calcium. A glass of milk a day for strong bones, right? Wrong. Or – at the very least – not necessarily. What you need to know with dairy is that the stuff you get on your table is pretty far from the goodness that comes out of the cow. (The grass-fed, organically farmed cow, that is).

As you know, store-bought milk is typically pasteurized in order to kill off bacteria. What you probably don't know is that the pasteurization process is destructive to milk. It kills virtually all the good bacteria and causes a drastic reduction in levels of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA). CLA is an essential (smart) fat which is 5 times higher in milk by grass-fed cows. This is also true of organic milk that's been pasteurized, although it's still a better option given that it's antibiotic, hormone and pesticide free. This lack of good bacteria makes the milk or dairy product un-actionable in your digestive system. Your body needs those bacteria in order to break down, absorb and utilize the milk, and without them it pretty much curdles before wreaking havoc with your colon. If consumed too frequently – can even be a pre-cursor to leaky gut syndrome, whereby small holes in your colon allow putrid waste to seep back in. This is a common cause of excess weight, tummy upset, and food intolerances.

If you're after the true goodness of dairy then raw milk is the only way to go. The fats in raw milk are digestible and it is full of health building CLA and good bacteria. Of course your raw milk must be organic and it must be grass-fed. I know that not everyone can afford to go full organic. Or even access full organic produce. But if you don't do anything else, then PLEASE only consume organic dairy products. Or else don't have them at all! Fortunately organic dairy products are now readily available in most major supermarkets.

As far as raw milk goes, there have been concerns raised – for example, what about the bad bacteria? My answer to that is simply to find a farmer or farmer's market that you can directly purchase your raw milk from, and, again, ensure it's of the highest quality by buying grass-fed, organic. Good quality raw milk, consumed while it's still fresh, has a very low chance of containing bad bacteria. I realize that finding such a product may necessitate some research and asking around, but hey – no one said the path to a great body inside and out is an easy one. In fact, in some countries or states of the US raw milk is illegal but it is increasingly becoming allowed as people realize its goodness and lobby for the government to pay attention. If you're unlucky enough to live in such a place then I'd suggest you stay off dairy and do some Internet research to find out how you can support lobbyists in your area. I guarantee they'll be there!

To give you a more detailed idea of why you definitely don't want to settle for standard supermarket dairy foods, read this:

Conventionally milked cows are kept in close quarters and therefore become sick. It's standard for them to be force-fed antibiotics and cheap, pesticide-filled grains instead of the healthy grass their intestinal systems are built for. This causes them to become sick. A common outcome of this is mastitis – pus of the udder. Do you think the milking machines are able to separate pus from milk? Don't think about that for too long, it just might turn your stomach.

As if that's not bad enough, the pasteurization process not only kills bad bacteria, but it kills the good bacteria and enzymes that make milk a whole and healthy food. In fact, even Louis Pasteur was recorded on his deathbed as saying that pasteurization was not such a great idea after all! Homogenization is no better – it causes the whole fat part of the dairy to be separated and destroyed.

Summing up? Conventional dairy is full of mastitis and antibiotics, has no live bacteria or enzymes, and has been treated roughly enough that your body can no longer even recognize it as a whole food. This means it is dealt with as would any toxin be, and every metabolic process must be slowed until it has passed through. Because it cannot be used for energy (nor is the calcium absorbable in case you're wondering), it can also result in increased fat stores – both directly, and through a slowed metabolism.

Long story short? Only choose organic or raw dairy, or don't even bother. You can get organic dairy even at your supermarket these days. Non-organic dairy will **slow your digestion, increase your fat storage, and quite likely irritate your colon leading to lactose intolerance and illness.**

3.5.2 Not So Healthy Soy

I know that soy still receives much promotion as a health food or supplement, but what I have found is increasingly more evidence showing that soy will:

Stimulate growth of estrogen-dependent tumors and cancer cells

Cause thyroid problems (your thyroid regulates your metabolism, and an under-active thyroid WILL mean that you can't lose weight)

Increase difficulties in menopause

- Disrupt your hormonal balance
- Disrupt digestion due to the phytic acid
- Inhibit nutrient absorption from all foods
- Cause hypothyroidism after ingesting as little as 30 grams (4 tablespoons) - with symptoms of lethargy, constipation, weight gain and fatigue

In the alternative and holistic health world there are two schools of thought on soy.

1. You must eat only soy foods that have been fermented to destroy toxins and increase digestive ability
2. Avoid it like the plague

Personally, when it comes to my health I don't like to take any chances, and so I tend to camp out with the second group. Whether or not soy, even fermented soy, is healthy for you is a hotly debated issue and one that will no doubt continue to wage for many years.

Much of the debate stems from the fact that the health benefits of fermented soy have been misconstrued as being applicable to non-fermented soy as well, which is simply not the case.

How a Fact Became a Lie

Fermented soybeans have been used in Asian cuisine for more than 1,000 years and these in no way reflect the processed soy that many people eat thinking it is good for them. Despite this, manufactures have still been allowed to label processed soy foods as 'heart healthy' since 1999. The health benefits were created by the food industry and its well-paid-for- scientists. By the time they were found out they had already made billions of dollars. The studies were based on healthy Asian populations, ignoring the fact that they ate ONLY fermented soy and ONLY in relatively small amounts.

These days even conventional doctors and advisors are starting to turn on soy (alternative health practitioners have been wary for years), and you've already read just a few of the pretty convincing not to mention scary reasons why you might want to consider the same.

While it's true that studies have shown Eastern cultures to 'thrive' on a high consumption of soy we've already discussed the fact that the soy these people eat is a far cry from what we consume. Western world soy is one of the world's most heavily genetically modified foods. This means it loses it's nutritional value, becoming unrecognizable and even toxic to your digestion system.

Most non-fermented soy products also contain added flavorings, preservatives, sweeteners, emulsifiers and synthetic nutrients. Do you think that's what the ancient cultures of Asia ate? Fat chance, huh?

Of course some will argue that the process of fermenting soy makes this otherwise nutritionally void food healthy. Fermentation breaks down phytic acid and toxins and enhances the beneficial probiotic properties of the food. It also reduces the levels of dangerous iso-flavones which are estrogen mimickers that upset your hormones, your thyroid and have been linked to cancer.

You can find fermented soy products at your organic whole foods store or supermarket, or at an Asian grocery store. Some of the popular fermented soy foods include:

- Natta – fermented soybeans high in Vitamin K2
- Tempe – soybean cake with a nutty flavor
- Milo – soybean paste with a salty, buttery flavor
- Soy sauce – although it often has a lot of other junk added so you must read the label

The choice from here is yours, but my advice is to avoid soy in all forms. I guess the only reason you might make an exception is if you've been invited for dinner at a Japanese restaurant, or if you're vegetarian/vegan and consider soy one of your only protein options.

Whatever you do, remember to avoid non-fermented or non-organic soy foods. They will mess with your digestion, affect your hormonal balance, and cause weight gain as well as some potentially serious health problems.

Organic or fermented organic soy products are okay, but you must check that they are 'certified' organic. It will say this on the label. Some people will argue that soy foods should be avoided altogether, that soy has no place in a 'real' (caveman) style diet. I like to err on the side of caution, and – since my mind is not fully made up on this particular part of the argument – avoid soy altogether. If you're vegetarian than perhaps you have a stronger case for including soy, but then you've already read my explanation of why vegetarianism is the antithesis of being in great shape!

3.5.3 Action List: Beverages, Proteins, and Fats

In order to sustain good health and weight loss, I need to drink _____ liters/ounces of water each day?

Is it okay to include diet sodas or low-cal snacks such as diet yogurts as long as you're eating healthy main meals?

It's important to eat good fat because:

- 1.
- 2.

Two types of healthy fat that I will now start to include in my daily diet are:

- 1.
- 2.

It's important to eat protein (preferably animal) regularly if I want to lose weight and feel my best. This is because:

- 1.
- 2.

Three types of protein that I am going to start eating more of are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is tofu a good source of non-animal protein?

What is a good source of non-animal protein?

Chapter 4: Stress and Energy

Did you know that three out of four people experience stress at least twice a month? And that over half those people would classify that stress as not only 'high' but 'consistently high'? When it comes to stress, you're not alone and it's definitely not just in your head. In fact, stress has been linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, weight gain, and lowered immunity. It can also lead to depression and addictive behavior.

As if that's not scary enough, stress and its effects are rapidly worsening in our Western societies. In the past 20 years, the number of people reporting stress affecting their productivity has gone up more than four times, and the latest research shows that one fourth of all the drugs prescribed in the US are for stress.

So how does this affect you, how does it affect your weight, and what can you do about it? If you rated in the danger zone on the stress questionnaire it's probably not a huge shock to know that stress is affecting your wellbeing. But it may come as a surprise to know that your excess weight not only could be, but certainly is, directly related to how stressed you are.

Sure, you may have heard it said that stress can cause you to gain weight or that it can make you sick, but I'll bet you've pretty much discarded the thought without even really thinking about it. If you're like most people, you probably prefer to think that stress is just in your head or that you should just learn to get over it.

The bad news? Even if your stress is entirely 100% imagined – a pretty unlikely scenario for anyone these days - it will still affect your physical health. You see, even a perceived stress, even something that never actually becomes true, can cause a physiological and hormonal reaction that will result in everything from poor health and low energy to an ever-increasing waistline. I'll explain exactly how that happens, but first let's look at exactly what stress is.

4.0.1 What is Stress?

Stress is anything that adds load to your body. It is your body's way of dealing with demand, and actually causes a chemical reaction. The chemicals released by stress allow you to focus and deal with that stress more effectively – a good thing if it's a matter of running for your life (the typical 'running from a saber-tooth tiger scenario', otherwise known as survival stress) and you need the resulting adrenaline burst to survive. But I don't have to tell you that stress-related chemicals are not so great if you're facing day-in-day out stress, some of which could even be imagined. Living this way leads to day-in-day-out rampant hormones and anxiety, and takes its toll on all aspects of your health.

You might not have ever thought about it in this much detail, but stress can attack you in a variety of ways. It can be:

- Physical
- Chemical
- Emotional or Mental
- Nutritional
- Religious
- Social
- Imagined
- Real
- Good
- Bad

Yes, stress can be good! We've become so used to thinking negatively about being stressed, to the point where stressing about impending or possible stress is making us even more stressed, but we've forgotten one crucial thing. Our bodies need stress. Thrive on it, in fact. It's how we grow and become stronger. An obvious example is the breaking down of muscle tissue in a weight training session being the catalyst for new and improved muscle definition.

Positive stress is called eustress, and is typically a result of a challenge or task that causes us to progress. Other examples of eustress include pushing yourself to run faster than you ever have, or to meet a tough but rewarding deadline at work.

It's important to put steps into place to harness good stress and its uplifting benefits, but first we need to focus on getting rid of the bad stuff – the stress that causes your body to remain in overload and results in the release of fat storing hormones. Unfortunately, if you lead a busy life like most people, then even good stressors can turn nasty. For example, while you may be excited about reaching an exercise or work goal, if your body is already under excess load then it just adds to the problem. And don't kid yourself that you work well under stress, or that you love the fast-paced lifestyle. Some people become addicted to the hyper but exhausted life of a stress-head, even going so far as to seek out stressful situations. If you're one of these people then you're going to reel in

shock at what you're about to read as you realize exactly what you've been unwittingly doing to your body.

4.0.2 Your Stress Response

Your body responds to acute and ongoing stress in a very real and detailed physiological manner. Elissa Epel, Ph.D, an assistant psychiatry professor at the University of California says this:

“While the immediate . . . response to acute stress can be a temporary loss of appetite, more and more we are coming to recognize that for some people, chronic stress can be tied to an increase in appetite -- and stress- induced weight gain.”

Shawn Talbott, PhD, an associate professor in the Department of Nutrition at the University of Utah and author of The Cortisol Connection, puts it another way:

“Often, our response to stress today is to sit and stew in our frustration and anger, without expending any of the calories or food stores that we would if we were physically fighting our way out of stress or danger.”

When you put those two comments together, and throw in some additional research and reading you come to realize the following: stress makes you fat in more than one way.

Firstly, your internal system has no idea you didn’t just use up all your food stores dealing with the stress, and assumes you will need to replenish. In nature (i.e. if you were a caveman) being stressed would mean you were running or fighting for your life, a natural outcome of which – apart from possible death and thus the end of stress – would be to use up existing energy stores. The bad news is that your body hasn’t figured out the difference between this sort of survival stress and internalized stress, it all just goes into one big ‘stress bucket’ and eventually results in an internal signal to make you hungry. These signals not only cause you to gain weight, but stress-related weight often gathers around the midsection, and in particular internally around your vital organs. In good old caveman times this was a good way of protecting your survival in times of food scarcity, but these days it just puts it at risk of diabetes and heart disease, and gives you a fat belly to boot.

To further complicate matters, the fuel our muscles need during ‘fight or flight’ is sugar, which is one reason we crave carbohydrates when we are stressed, says endocrinologist Riccardo Perfetti, MD, PhD.

“So people who are under stress, metabolically speaking, will gain weight”

Let’s take a closer look at how the stress-weight gain response works. The long and short of it is that when you’re stressed, your body releases certain hormones and changes certain physiological responses. Here are some important examples.

- Adrenalin, which is released for instant energy, is churned out whenever you get a stress hit. Unfortunately, adrenaline has no automatic off switch. This is one reason why stress can create a vicious cycle.

- Corticotrophin releasing hormone (CRH) increases and triggers off the release of –
- Cortisol – which unfortunately can stick around long after the stress has passed, and causes a continued increase in appetite. In fact, one of the primary jobs of cortisol is to efficiently and speedily shuttle as much fat as possible into any existing fat cells, and even make new fat cells when the existing ones fill up! This is a survival mechanism that you just can't beat – unless you learn to manage stress and detoxify cortisol from your body. Just one additional point on cortisol – it's not actually a baddie when released as it should be. You'll learn in the sleep section how crucial cortisol is to daily energy; the bad side of it is when constant stress causes your body to release the stuff all day long instead of on certain necessary occasions. Here's an excerpt from an article I wrote previously on long-term exposure to cortisol.

When under constant stress your Sympathetic Nervous System (the part that gets you 'going') is being stimulated all the time. This stimulation causes the constant release of a cortisol into your bloodstream. When released only in times of emergency, cortisol helps you to move quickly, think fast, and manage extreme situations. It also shuts down your digestion and causes short-term fat storage (because you need to be able to survive if you're on the run – remember our bodies don't know we're not living on the land!). If released constantly, cortisol results in long-term fat storage, poor digestion, a jumpy or anxious mind, sadness or depression, apathy, lethargy, and a whole host of other unwelcome symptoms.

- Your glucagon levels are also affected. If you remember this hormone from the food section you'll know that it's primarily a fat- burning hormone, and that excess stress will disrupt its ability to do its job.
- Your adrenals become exhausted and cortisol eventually drops, but by now it's too late. The damage is done, and all that's achieved by this eventual lowering of cortisol is that you can barely summon the energy to make it through the day. One well-known outcome of this is the condition fibromyalgia, which drains the body and mind of all energy, effectively halting normal function.
- Insulin production may also become inhibited, leading to the onset of diabetes, an inability to resist insulin, and thus the increased storage of body fat, particularly around the mid-section and internal organs.
- Your immune defense cells also reduce in number.

As you can see, basically every aspect of your hormonal system is negatively affected, and the symptoms only worsen over time. In some cases, this even leads to severe psychological conditions.

4.0.3 Only a Little Bit Stressed? Think Again

The truth is that even a little stress, if it's all day every day, can add up to long-term weight gain. You might think that all your worries and woes are separate to each other, that your anxiety over finding enough time to exercise has nothing to do with your concern about keeping your boss happy. But your body can't tell the difference – it's unable to differentiate between one stress and another. It's not as though your body has separate 'buckets' for each different stressor. Nutritional stress from a take-out meal, emotional stress from a disagreement, a special place for your worries about the afterlife.

It just all gets lumped in together.

Imagine this.

Somewhere in your brain or body is a big funnel. Every time something causes you stress, the funnel gets a little fuller. This even goes for positive stress, but is particularly relevant to those things causing you emotional, physical, mental or spiritual discomfort or pain.

Let's say you don't have any 'one big thing' that is causing you stress. You have a happy home life, a good job, great friends, and fun hobbies. Of course there are things you'd like to change or improve – such as losing weight – but things are pretty good overall. But you do lead a busy life. You're constantly on the run, you have to be super-organized to fit in time for yourself, and you never quite seem to get around to doing as much healthy food preparation as you'd like. You've a few annoying bills unpaid, you keep forgetting to book that holiday, or you can't really afford it, and you haven't caught up with that good friend for a while. No big deal. That's life, right?

But even though none of that stuff is super urgent or causing great pain, it still goes into the stress funnel. You're not at the dangerous level, but you're not leading a carefree life either.

So what happens if things get turned up a notch?

- You get a big fine
- The dog needs an operation
- Serious sickness occurs within your family
- Your job is threatened
- A crime-wave hits your area
- You start to really stress about why you're not losing weight
- Life gets a little busier and you cut out the 'you-time'

In a healthy body, any of these things would be able to be managed. Sure, they'd be stressful, or painful, or difficult to deal with, but they wouldn't affect your long-term health or weight.

The problem is that your stress funnel already had a fair bit in it. Which means that when one big stress occurs, or even several smaller stressors rear up, that funnel suddenly fills up real quick.

All of a sudden, you're body is under stress all day long. This creates a vicious cycle. You can't think properly, you're distracted constantly, and you just can't stop worrying. Your control starts to slip a little – you miss a workout, your eating goes through a bad patch.

Sound familiar?

Guess what? All these (natural) reactions to the stress cause more stress. The funnel tops up a little more. It's dangerously close to overflowing.

Can you see how stress – whether it's a real thing or whether it's worries in your head – creates a vicious cycle of damage? Unless you do something to take a load off, and do it fast, then you're only going to end up more stressed. And here's what will happen:

Your weight will continue to climb regardless of what you eat or how much exercise you do. This is your body's way of protecting you. Your body assumes that if you're under that much stress, then your life must be in danger. Either you're running or fighting for your life, or you have no food available. So shut down all systems, cause we need as much fat stored as possible in order to get you through this stressful time.

So until you take a load off and get that stress funnel back within the comfortable range – you will never lose the weight you want to lose. Harsh? Yes. True? Absolutely.

Do you see why this section is so important now? If you've landed here first – or even second – or even way down the line – then there's a reason.

But don't worry, I am going to give you a solution, and it's not to quit your life and run away to a deserted island. Realistically, we all have to face stress; it's simply not possible to avoid it. But with just a little discipline, plus the right knowledge and application you can train your body to react in a way that benefits rather than harms you. First, let's look at some of the ways that stress could be affecting you.

4.0.4 Signs You are Suffering from Your Stress

- You're jittery or anxious
- You find it hard to concentrate
- You experience regular constipation or diarrhea
- You have frequent stomach pains
- You suffer from heartburn or reflux
- You have constant aches and pains in muscles and joints
- Your weight won't shift despite eating and exercising well
- Your sociability increases or decreases
- Your appetite increases or decreases
- You notice increased sweating, especially at night
- You experience restless sleep
- You become moody or miserable
- You feel overwhelmed
- You're tired all the time
- You're just about ready to give up on ever being happy

Now these are all general reactions to stress. And much of what we've spoken about has been identifying common stressors. But what about one of the biggest stressors that we haven't yet mentioned, one which is especially relevant to Secrets of Weight Loss Revealed readers?

4.0.5 Dieting, Exercise and Stress: A Risky Combination

Typical health advice would tell you to reduce stress by managing your diet and exercising more. And most people would take this to mean cut out fat and eat less in general. Well that's just going to make things worse for you, and here's why.

A study published in the Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 2001 found that severely limiting calorie intake could kick off a series of biochemical events that ultimately not only increased stress levels, but could make people feel more hungry, and therefore lead to increased appetite! Researchers found that those who had consumed the least food had the highest levels of cortisol, and the less food they ate, the more this went up. And with cortisol being the fat storing hormone that it is, this really is a recipe for disaster.

Sure, following a low-cal, low-fat or otherwise restrictive diet in the past may have caused some short-term weight loss. But then it stopped working, right? Plus – you felt awful. The reasons why these sort of diets don't work are well outlined in the food section, so let's focus on what these sort of behaviors do to your stress funnel.

As soon as you start cutting calories, restricting or cutting out macronutrients (protein, fat, carbs), or using meal replacements or shakes regularly instead of real food, your body goes into panic mode.

Your nervous system thinks something is seriously wrong – that you may even be running out of your food supply. Or that perhaps you've been captured and your life is in danger.

Either way – if you've read this far you'll know what's coming.

Yep – your body goes straight into fat-storing mode. Let me tell you something. Unless you sit back, relax and start immediately eating right (protein and fat), then there is nothing you can do to stop this reaction. Apart from the obvious of course – which is removing the stress. This is just one reason why a typical diet will never work and will only cause you to gain more weight in the long run. The ultimate outcome? If you did have the willpower to follow such a diet indefinitely, it would actually kill you in the end. Maybe not for years, and maybe not directly, but the effect on every system in your body would ultimately lead to serious illness and your demise.

Sounds pretty full on, doesn't it? But the scary part is, it also makes sense now that you know how your body really handles stress.

Even short-term restrictive diets will cause a stress reaction leading to weight gain. And although you may well lose that weight in the short-term, you'll pay the price in the long run. If you have an event coming up in two weeks and plan to half starve yourself to lose that little bit extra, just consider the long- term repercussions. Believe me, you'll be regretting that extra yo-yoed weight far longer than you remember the event. Keep in mind also, that repeated stress in your body starts

to become a habit, so if you do this sort of thing too often, your body will continue to release stress hormones even after you start living healthy again. That's a tough – and extremely damaging – pattern to break.

Of course diet isn't the only weight-gain related stressor. Your feelings, emotions and anxieties can all top up your stress funnel, and lead to weight gain or weight that just won't shift.

If you regularly feel:

- Sad
- Lonely
- Anxious or panicky
- Worried
- Anti-social
- Grumpy and moody

Then the chances are really high that stress is affecting your fat-burning hormone production and causing you to keep excess weight on.

(A quick sideline: if you are on prescribed medication for depression or another psychological disorder I recommend you may like to discuss some of what you've read with your primary health physician. Mental illness is a serious condition and requires appropriate treatment, and the advice given here is based only on my own opinion, experience, and research.)

Any or all of the above feelings can, of course, be related back to realities or circumstance in your life – but not all the time. What I'm saying is that sometimes there is an obvious reason for the way you feel, but in many cases people just plain feel down or sad, and they've no idea why. If you frequently feel down in the dumps it could be that you aren't eating correct nutrition for your needs. You see, eating a diet that is balanced in the right fuel gives your body the 'equipment' it needs to ensure that all systems run at their best.

We've talked – and will continue to talk – a lot about your hormonal system. One of the reasons I keep coming back to this is that it is one of the first systems to be affected by poor/inadequate nutrition, or by stress. By affected I mean that your body becomes incapable of producing the hormones you need to live at your best, have good energy, a healthy libido, and optimize all metabolic processes – including weight loss.

Stress can be a bit like the chicken and the egg. Where does it start? Should you try and get rid of the stress to ensure good hormone balance, or should you try to optimize hormone balance in order to get rid of the low moods and stress?

Hormone balance is so crucial to weight loss success that I've designed this entire book to ensure optimum hormone production through every pathway we take, but the answer, of course, is a little of both.

4.0.6 When Bad Moods Make You Fat

Are you at risk of weight gain from your moods? If you identified with the questions on sadness, loneliness, anxiety or worry, and social habits, then it's more than likely that your moods are topping up your stress funnel.

You know that this is affecting your weight (or indeed that any stress is doing so) if you notice the following symptoms:

- Cravings have increased
- You feel an increased urge for salt, fatty and sugary foods
- You feel like you 'need' food to feel better
- You notice your blood sugars (sudden energy) go up and down
- You notice that you're storing more fat around the midsection or that you just can't shift belly fat even though the rest of you may be slimming down.
- You have less interest in exercise.

Oftentimes the hormonal responses to stress won't show up in a blood or hormone test until they are fully evident in your body. You may have all the symptoms of a system under stress, but be told by a your physician that nothing is wrong, despite the fact that the way you feel, look and function is saying otherwise! Don't worry – there is a solution.

Lighten Your Load And Balance Your Body

First you'll need to identify your stress. I've listed some areas that commonly cause people stress.

- Home
- Family
- Friends
- Other networks/ communities
- Hobbies
- Work/ business/ career
- Finances
- Health (yours or someone close to you)
- Spirituality
- Sex
- Partner/ lack of partner
- Children/ lack of children
- Terrorism
- Neighborhood/ personal safety
- Living/ not living according to your deep values and beliefs
- Please add your own area in your journal if I haven't covered it

Sometimes you may not even be aware of an area causing you stress until you stop and think about. Use your journal to comment on what is stressing you in each area, or leave blank as needed. In each of these categories, ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I feel anxious or stressed or angry about this area of my life?
2. If yes, what is the first thing that comes to mind as a reason for feeling this way?
3. What else?
4. What is it about this thing/person/event that causes me to feel this way?
5. What else?

Out of everything you have just thought about or commented on, what would you say are your top three stressors? The things that are causing you the greatest pain, fear, discomfort, anxiety? Write these down on a fresh page.

Now that you've identified your stressors you need to work on changing your thinking. This can be hard to do, and it takes time to make a complete mental shift, but it's well worth the effort. For each of your 'big three', ask yourself these questions. (Of course you can do this for all your smaller

stressors, but I recommend focusing on the big three to begin with, as this makes it more achievable. Once you have dealt with those, you may like to move on to other areas of stress).

1. Out of 100, how stressful do I perceive this to be? 100 would be stressful enough to cause death or a complete physical or mental breakdown, for example.
2. What is the worst possible outcome of this situation?
3. On a scale of 1-10, how likely is it that this will happen?
4. Re-evaluate: having thought about the likelihood of the worst-case outcome actually occurring, what score out of 100 would you now give this stress?

And finally you need to take action. Even if your 'out of 100' scores have lowered considerably, consider what you can do to remove or diminish the stress. Ask yourself these questions and be sure to write the answers in your journal. You may not be able to answer all of them, but you can sure give it your best shot.

1. What can I do right now to start to manage this stress?
2. What can I do later on today to manage this stress?
3. What can I do this week to manage this stress?
4. What sort of help or support do I need to deal with this stress?
5. What do I need to research, plan for or prepare to manage this stress. Commit a date to doing so – put it in your notebook, and in your diary.
6. From the things I need to research or ask for help with, what can I do right now to get that process started? This might be as simple as looking up a phone number or sending an email, it's just about taking action.

Of course you're not going to systematically tackle each and every stress in your life, or that in itself would become a huge source of stress! The above process is great for dealing with the big issues that you can reduce or handle, but you'll need some general pointers for managing the kind of day-to-day stress that a busy life makes seem out of your control. Remember - even the simplest of these are incredibly powerful in reducing the load that stress causes to your system, and this in turn helps you to more effectively burn fat.

4.0.7 Stress-Burning 101

- Find something to laugh at – whether it’s a favorite funny movie or book, or just watching Funniest Home Videos! Even making fun of a friend will do (in a nice way, of course!)
- Take a warm bath
- Meditate for 15 minutes – this doesn’t mean saying ‘ohm’ , although that’s fine if that works for you. Meditation is anything that takes your mind away from the day-to-day. It could be doing nothing, it could be exercising, or playing a game, or just lying down in the sun.
- Count backwards from 100. Slowly.
- Perform gentle stretches for 15 minutes
- Take breathing breaks. It sounds silly, but it’s easy to forget to breathe properly in the midst of your frantic life.
- Close your eyes and daydream
- Read or watch something that calms you
- Talk to a friend and unload
- Take a slow walk in a park
- Laugh – yes, I know I said that already. It’s just that it really works!
- Get a book on stress management (read it)
- Listen to your favorite music
- Play with your pet
- Exercise regularly
- Be prepared for upcoming stressful situations
- Research your situation – find other people who have been there and can support you or just help you feel less alone
- Write your own 5-step process to reducing or managing the stress.

- Take action!

When it Still Just Seems Like too Much

Experience has taught me that whoever invented multi-tasking clearly either never put their theory to the test, or must just have had ADHD. I've found that the best results – in anything – come from dedicating yourself to one thing at a time, and just getting the job done without wasting time chopping and changing or letting yourself get distracted by other tasks. If we apply this theory to stress reduction for weight loss, then it doesn't even mean just getting rid of one 'stress' at a time. It means you need to break the stress down into manageable chunks, and then dedicate yourself to getting one of those chunks done each day. Some days this might be as simple as taking time out for yourself – other days it might be something more demanding, like speaking to an unreasonable boss, or confronting someone about an issue you're not happy with.

Try going back to the last group of questions you answered, and use these tips as a starting point for constructing your own step-by-step guide to managing each of your three big stressors. Make each chunk easily manageable, as in, able to be completed in one day. This doesn't mean you'll enjoy doing each chunk, just that you know it can be done in one day.

Dealing With Acute Stress

Sometimes you truly have no control over the things that are stressing you. But that doesn't mean you can't control the way you handle it. In a situation that is unchangeable, such as the serious illness of someone close to you, then dealing with that stress comes back to the way you choose to think about it. Yes, some things in life are truly awful. But if you really try, you can find a positive spin on even the most horrible situations. It might be difficult, but there is always an opportunity to use your experiences as a means to give back to others, or to learn how to look after other areas of your life regardless of tough times. You can also use many of the general stress pointers above to promote relaxation as even a temporary release in a time of acknowledged hardship. It will likely feel like the last thing you want to be doing, but I guarantee it will go at least some small way toward helping you feel better.

4.0.8 Final Words on Stress

Before we wrap up this section, I want to remind you of why we're talking about stress. I cannot emphasize this enough. The combination of different stressful things in your life can add up or accumulate to the point where your body continually releases hormones that cause you to gain weight. This is a survival mechanism that comes back to your body not realizing you're living in the 21st century.

The effects of stress will disrupt your weight loss program in indirect ways as well. Some of this is probably obvious, but I think it helps to have the reminder. Many people who have become used to living with ongoing stress are simply not aware of just how much of their lives are affected until they stop and think about it.

Short-term effects of excess stress

- Poor concentration or mental focus
- Digestion impaired
- Poor quality sleep or sleeping disorders
- Social life affected
- Lowered libido
- Fatigue
- Bad moods
- Weight gain
- Bad skin
- Work and relationships bear the brunt

Long-term effects of excess stress

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Alzheimer's disease
- Breakdown of families and friendships
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- May not achieve career potential

There's one obvious answer that we've only briefly touched on. Aside from using correct nutrition to deal with stress, you can learn to harness good stress and enjoy its uplifting benefits.

As you read earlier, it's not all doom and gloom when it comes to stress. In fact, when used correctly, good stress (eustress) can even help you to lose weight and succeed in other life goals!

Oh, in case you're wondering, bad stress is actually called 'distress'. It's just become common in our society to refer to it as simply 'stress'.

Long story short, the truth is, we are designed to exist with a certain level of eustress. It's purpose is to help sharpen mental skills, increase decision making ability, hone our physical, emotional and mental skills, and prepare us for whatever life might have in store for us. Eustress also recharges our batteries and stimulates positive cell growth – both of which can assist you to achieve hormonal balance and thus lose weight.

Now I'm sure you can think of some examples of eustress in your life, but here are some of my favorites:

- A challenging workout
- Racing to reach a deadline (even one you give yourself) for an important goal. For me, this was finishing this book within a certain timeframe. Mind you, I must admit I did run rather overtime in the end, thus causing myself a fair bit of bad stress, but I hope the positive stress of finally finishing it will outweigh that! Part of dealing with stress, of course, is knowing that it's okay not to be superwoman/man.
- Putting yourself out of your comfort zone to speak with an object of desire
- Asking for a pay-rise and getting it. Or not getting it but being able to revel in your courage for asking and knowing that you've put yourself out there as a serious player
- Completing a difficult crossword or puzzle
- Learning a language
- Cuddling a baby
- Getting a massage
- Learning any new skill
- Doing something you are not comfortable with, like dancing in public, or singing, and then feeling great about it
- Making it through a full week of healthy eating

Can you think of some of your own? Unlike distress, eustress experiences don't often come into our lives without us inviting them. So it's up to you to sharpen your skills by creating some positive challenge.

Write down five eustress goals or experiences you can set for yourself. Your waistline will thank you, and you might even have fun doing it! Don't put this off – whip out your journal and do it now.

The ideas of 'eustress' (good stress) and 'distress' (bad stress) were developed by Hans Selye, one of the early researchers on stress. Selye believed that a mild level of stress encouraged animals and people to behave in a more active way, while an excessive level of stress would hamper their performance.

4.0.9 Action List: Stress

When it comes to stress, do you consider yourself?

1. Highly stressed, anxious, worried, always on the go
2. 'Medium' stressed, can get frantic from time to time, but able to relax easily and often
3. Not stressed except on rare occasions

What are the reasons for your choice?

Make a list of your top three sources of negative stress. Take a few moments to think about why these things cause you to feel or be stressed. The following questions might help:

- How much of the way you react is within your control to change?
- In each of the three areas, rate how stressed you feel about it out of ten
- Now consider for each of the three areas what's the worst possible thing that could happen
- And what's the likelihood of that worst thing happening? Out of 10?
- Now think about whether you can re-rate your initial stress reaction. Is it realistic for you to (continue) letting this thing affect your peace and happiness?

Let's talk about something nicer – I'd like you to note down 3 positive forms of stress currently in your life or about to be introduced. A new exercise regime might be an example.

If they're not something already in your schedule, make a note of when you will change that.

Finally, take a few minutes to think about some positive things you can do to release the stress you either can't control, or that which you plan to continue (such as tired muscles from exercise).

What are five stress-busting techniques you'd like to try out?

Make a quick list in your journal, and then plan to try one each week or so for the coming month.

Chapter 5: Sleep

5.0.1 The Link Between Your Sleep and Your Weight

If you pride yourself on how little sleep you need, then now is the time to re-assess that point of view. Although it might feel like less sleep gives you more time in your day to be productive, or to exercise, the truth is that it does your weight loss plan no favors at all. Scientists have recently proven what natural health therapists have known for years – sleep deprivation increases levels of hunger hormones and decreases levels of a hormone that makes you feel full. Talk about a great way to sabotage yourself!

If you truly do eat well and exercise – in fact, even if you followed the food portion of this book to the letter – but are still overweight, then this could be your answer.

Eve Van Cauter, a University of Chicago sleep researcher says that one of the reasons we crave rich or sugary foods may be because “we are sleep-deprived and unable to curb our appetites.” Van Cauter directed a blood test based study on sleep deprivation and says that sleep deprivation activates a part of the brain that control appetite and satiety. It also affects ghrelin and leptin, two hormones that control how much you eat. Lack of sleep lowers levels of leptin (your natural piggy bank brake), thus making you hungry, and heightens ghrelin (your eat-all-you-want accelerator), which again, makes you hungry!

In Van Cauter’s study, the sleep-deprived men who had the biggest changes in ghrelin and leptin also reported the highest levels of hunger and craved carbohydrate-rich foods, including cakes, candy, ice cream, pasta and bread.

In fact, one participant said that after getting only four hours of sleep for two straight nights, he was so hungry he could have eaten his pillow! However he had no problems with hunger after the longer nights of sleep.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, around 63% of us do not get the recommended eight hours of sleep each night. But is eight hours really what you need? It does seem that some people happily get by on less. Van Cauter recommends taking the following approach to figure out your unique sleep needs:

“The next time you're on vacation, sleep as much as you can the first couple of days. That way you can pay off your sleep debt, she says. Then, when your sleep has stabilized, record how much you sleep, plus or minus 15 minutes. That is your sleep need or capacity.”

Other studies I have read indicate that sleeping as much as possible on holidays can prevent holiday weight gain, but this is definitely a band-aid approach. How often do you go on holidays, after all? I wouldn’t like to bank my entire weight loss success on sleeping deep for a couple weeks each year rather than simply changing my day-to-day behavior.

Would you?

If you're still not convinced, then consider the following.

1. Research from the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University showed that people who routinely slept five hours a night had a 14.9% higher level of ghrelin (the hormone that makes you hungry) and a 15.5% lower level of leptin (the hormone that makes you feel full) than those who slept eight hours. Now imagine what might happen to you hormonally if you slept only four hours. Or three.
2. A groundbreaking 1999 study showed that after six days on only four hours of sleep, healthy volunteers would fall into a pre-diabetic state. Another study showed that those who slept less than 4.5 hours per night had an increased mortality rate.
3. Another study I looked at monitored over 68,000 women for 16 years. The results showed that those who slept less than five hours per night were not only prone to rapid weight gain (in some cases over 30 pounds), but also had a higher chance of obesity as they aged. The most shocking part was that it made no difference what they ate or how much they exercised.
4. According to an article in the Washington Post, a lack of sleep increases your risk of many diseases. It puts your body into a state of high alert, which increases blood pressure and stress hormones. It also leads to problems maintaining stable blood sugar levels.
5. Poor quality sleep can actually disrupt every metabolic process in your body, cause massive upset to your hormonal system, and re-program your body to hold onto existing weight rather than utilize it for energy.
6. Researchers found that people who sleep two to four hours a night are 73% more likely to be obese than those who get seven to nine hours.
7. Those who get five or less hours of sleep a night are 50% more likely to be obese than normal sleepers.
8. Those who sleep six hours or less are 23% more likely to be obese.

So let's be honest? In which category do you fall? And – more importantly - can you really keep telling yourself that lack of sleep hasn't affected your health or your weight? That you 'manage'?

If you're living in the vicious cycle of 'gotta-get-more-done-so-I'll-catch-up-on- sleep-on-the-weekend', then you're kidding yourself. Only when you're truly rested can you effectively relax and

detoxify stress and its fat-storing effects, and only then can you truly be at your best for exercise, work and life.

But why does sleep matter so much? What is it about setting the super-early- bird alarm that causes our hormones to fight against us?

5.0.2 How Electricity is Making You Fat

Until the invention of the light bulb, there was little incidence of obesity, and diabetes and heart disease were unheard of.

Sounds ridiculous, I know, but it's actually a pretty simple link.

- Before the light-bulb, factories were unable to operate all night
- After the light-bulb, factories could run throughout the night, processing grains and turning them into products for us to eat
- Within a few years agriculture had more than quadrupled, and the average Western diet had switched from roughly 80% protein to 80% carbohydrate
- Within a decade, an increasing incidence of heart disease and obesity
- was being reported. Diabetes was soon to follow.

So what should you do?

5.0.3 You're Just Not Designed to Stay Up so Late

Have you ever gone camping?

Funny how you seem to get tired a lot sooner, isn't it? In fact, unless your campground is pretty high-tech, torchlight is not generally enough to keep you up for more than a cursory drink or two round the campfire. When you're outside and the sun goes down, then that's it really. Lights are out. Your eyes droop no matter how much you fight it. And so you stop eating and go to bed.

If you think about it this is actually the way things are supposed to be. In the real world, you have no option to stay up as late as you like. But in the comfort of your lounge room, you can stay up all night if you choose. A flick of the light-switch is all it takes for your hormones to think it's still daytime. You can even go to the gym 24-hours in some towns! You can eat out, go to the movies, you can do everything that would traditionally be considered a daytime activity.

Is it any wonder your body doesn't have a clue what time of day it is?

And guess what?

If your body thinks it's daytime, then your appetite is stimulated. Not only this, but you are physiologically programmed to think that summertime means 'eat more carbohydrates'. This is because if you were living on the land, carbs would not be readily available during wintertime. Storing fat during summer – when the carbs are available – is what your body is designed to do to keep you alive during the long cold 'famine' of winter.

Just stop for a moment and have a think about how this reality could be affecting the way you eat and store fat.

Have you noticed how the later you stay up, the more you want to eat? You might start off the evening with a healthy dinner, feeling pretty good about your determination to reach your weight loss goals. Then what happens?

"Maybe I'll have some fruit while I watch TV. It's healthy, after all!" ...

"Oh, I think I might just have a little low-fat yogurt" ...

"Mmm, just a small spoonful of this ice cream"

Until an hour or so later you're scoffing down the last of a family-size bag of peanut M&Ms, telling yourself you'll start afresh tomorrow.

And where does it all end?

Here's a clue. Turn off the lights and you just might find out. Give your body half a chance to realize what time of day it is, and that summertime does not, in fact, exist all year round. Oh, and one more thing. Constant exposure to bright lights can also disrupt your male/female hormone balance and has been linked to infertility. Just something to think about.

5.0.4 The Importance of Your Circadian Rhythms

Not sleeping enough can be quite the vicious cycle, as I'm sure any busy worker, parent, or student can attest. This is because having a disrupted hormonal system (whether it's from poor sleep or from poor nutrition, or other stressors) can, in turn, cause you to sleep poorly.

Your circadian rhythms are the natural rhythms that your body and your hormones should follow in keeping with the time of day. In a healthy body it would look something like this.

6 AM	The rise of the sun stimulates your 'get-up-and-go' hormones, pre-charging you for the day ahead.
1 – 2 PM	Your energy slumps a little. This is nothing to do with a heavy lunch. It's just your body's way of telling you it's siesta time.
4 - 5PM	You get a 'second wind'
6 - 7PM	This energy should last easily until around 6pm, at which time your body should begin to release 'winding-down' hormones to prepare you for sleep.
10 PM	You should be just about ready to drift off. You're designed to rise and fall with the sun.

Being in tune with this rhythm is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, according to Holistic Health Practitioner Paul Chek, your physical repair takes place between 10pm and 2am, and your psychological repair takes place between 2am and 6am. So what happens if you don't get to bed until 2?

You're in trouble, that's what. Poor recovery during sleep will affect everything about the way you function, and I don't have to tell you that it makes it a lot harder to workout, or even think about proper food preparation.

Not only that, you'll likely end up relying on coffee and other stimulants to keep you going throughout the day. Until the mid-afternoon sugar-kick, of course.

And don't kid yourself that you've effectively shifted your sleep rhythms. Sure, getting eight hours at anytime is better than five or six, but you won't truly be at your absolute best unless those eight hours are pretty close to the 10PM- 6AM mark. If you're a shift-worker whose sleep hours frequently change then I'd strongly suggest you consider a career-change. I realize this is pretty harsh advice, but there's nothing more important than your health. And the sorry truth is that you really have no control at all over what will happen to you physically, emotionally or mentally if you don't have consistent sleep patterns.

5.0.5 Escaping The Cycle of Poor Sleep

If you can't get to sleep, if you don't stay in bed for at least 7 hours sleep, if you toss and turn, if you wake sluggish, or are hyped up at night, then you're in trouble.

Your body probably has no idea what time it is, and nor do your hormones. Not only is this causing you to gain weight by overloading your stress systems, but all that restlessness and nervous exhaustion is stimulating personality characteristics such as tension, anger and irritability. This is known by many health practitioners as an excess of 'yang' (a Chinese term for male). Excess yang is one reason you may toss and turn at night, find it tough to fall asleep, or have night sweats. Here are some of the primary reasons for excess yang and poor sleep.

- Mental or emotional stress
- Working hours too long, taking work home with you (actually or just in your head)
- Keeping the TV or computer on past 7pm (especially if it's the computer for work)
- Sugar, too much alcohol, coffee at night
- Eating too close to bed-time (before 8pm is ideal)
- Worries about the day ahead; things racing through your mind (keep a small notebook by your bed-side so you can jot thoughts down and get them out of your head)
- Too much or too little exercise

A good nights sleep is just as important as exercise and nutrition, and given that the typical westerner accumulates two full weeks of sleep debt per year then I'd say there's a fair chance you've got a sizable repayment to make.

Mistakes Poor Sleepers Make

Sometimes getting up early for a morning workout is the worst thing you can do. If you've had inadequate rest, then exercise just depletes you further, pushing your hormonal system into super-fat-storing mode. And exercise isn't the only potential problem you face. Restrictive or low-cal diets are just as bad. Not only will they not help you lose weight for the reasons we've discussed in the food section, but they'll force your body back into yet another stress pattern.

When you haven't slept enough then even the healthiest exercise (weight training), or anything else that breaks down your muscle tissue is a complete waste of time. If you're not in a state of recovery and rest at the start of the day, how can you possibly deal with an intense workout? You might feel a little good psychologically for having done it, but believe you me, the physical detriment you've caused will easily outweigh that feel-good factor.

5.0.6 Sleep Thieves

But don't be thinking the solution lies in quick-fix pick-me-ups. You know what I'm talking about - I know I'm not the only one who has used caffeine or sugar to get me through the day after a poor night's sleep. No matter how good my intentions, and regardless of how much I know about the effects of these stimulants on weight gain, it's pretty hard not to reach for the hit when your eyes are stinging and your body is crying out to go home. It's even tougher not to go for the chocolate at the end of the day.

Of course this is actually the worst thing I can do, and I'm only setting myself up for another night of sleep failure. How about you? Have you ever been guilty of the same?

Although both (the right sort of) alcohol and caffeine can work positively in your body, I advise my clients to only drink coffee or alcohol when they feel energized. In other words, have it because you enjoy it and you are making a conscious choice to indulge. Not because you feel as though you need it. I know this can be tough at first. Believe me, I've been there. But wouldn't you agree that there's nothing better than enjoying an espresso just because, rather than because you NEED it? Same advice goes for sweet treats. If I'm going to have a chocolate bar, I want to know it's because I've chosen to, not because poor health and stress are controlling my actions.

Wouldn't you like to be able to do the same?

Apart from the sense of pride you'll feel at breaking the 'need' to have these things, you'll be checking off another box on the road to weight loss and exceptional health. Here are some facts to help twist your arm on this topic:

- Nicotine is a well-known neuro-stimulant – it gets your mind going nineteen to the dozen
- Another little-known stimulant is MSG, present in many take-out foods as well as chips and similar snacks.
- Caffeine sensitivity differs from person to person. You may find that you need to keep away from it from as early as noon in order to drop off easily and enjoy a truly deep night of rest.
- Alcohol impairs the transport of tryptophan into the brain, and tryptophan releases serotonin (a neurotransmitter that helps you to sleep).
- Caffeine has a half-life of 12 hours. This means that if you have a coffee at 3pm then half of that caffeine is still in your system at 3am. And some of it is still running around when you have your first coffee the next day! And that's if you have an 'average' sensitivity.

- Caffeine, alcohol and sugar can all inhibit hormones that help you burn fat, can all be toxic and cause your body to use good nutrients for detoxification, and they can definitely make you jittery, nervous or anxious.
- Caffeine, alcohol and sugar also all affect your deep-sleep ability. Even though you may fall asleep, you will not be sleeping as soundly, or recovering as fully, as you would be without these substances in your bloodstream.
- Sugar and alcohol are guilty of making you store fat faster than you would without them in your diet
- Alcohol can impair your thought processes, causing you to eat more and stay up later than you otherwise would

5.0.7 Re-setting Your Body Clock and Burning Fat Naturally

The sleep/wake cycle is controlled, in large part, by the secretion of melatonin by the pineal gland, which is located deep within the brain. Melatonin production surges during nighttime sleep.

The simple clicking on of a bedside lamp means light comes along, blocks (pineal) stimulation, and causes a simultaneous drop in melatonin levels.

But there is hope! You can break the vicious cycle of no sleep, re-set your body clock, and get those fat-burning hormones back on track. Here's how to do that.

- Set consistent bedtimes. Ensure you get to bed within 60 minutes of the same time each evening. No matter what. Just stop whatever you're doing. If it's a favorite show, tape it. If it's house or computer work, write it on your to do list for tomorrow. Nothing will make you more productive like more sleep.
- Set consistent wake-up times. Do this regardless of how well you slept the night before. Forcing yourself to get up at around the same time each day will force your body back into it's natural pattern. Better to suffer exhaustion for a few days while you do this, rather than forever.
- If you struggle to drop off, simulate nighttime indoors. A minimum of one hour before bedtime, turn the lights low and the TV off. Avoid loud or pop music. Try classical music on low, and read by lamplight. Or do something completely wild like talk to someone!
- Avoid alcohol, sugar, and carbohydrates after dinner as they are stimulants that can impair your sleep even if you do manage to drop off.
- Avoid caffeine after 3pm, as it will remain in your system for at least 12 hours.
- Ensure your sleeping environment is the best it can be. Ideally this would involve a comfortable temperature, with clean and cozy bedding, minimal noise and light. If necessary, try earplugs and an eye mask. I swear by my eye mask, and that's even though my room is already pitch black. I just love it!
- Some people find a hot bath 90 minutes before sleep to be very helpful. This is because your body releases sleep hormones as your temperature returns from warm to normal.
- Eat well throughout the day. Duh.
- Sleepy-time teas like Chamomile or St John's Wort can help you wind down before bed. In fact, St John's Wort is actually illegal for pilot's to use within 8 hours of flying so this herb

must be pretty powerful! Natural supplements like Valerian can also be quite useful. I think it's irrelevant whether or not the effect is placebo based. If it works, it works.

- Prescribed sleeping pills are nothing more than a band-aid solution, meaning they cover up the real reasons for why you can't sleep. On top of this, many people report that they stop working after several weeks, and this can lead to increased dosages and addictive behavior.
- Clear your busy mind by jotting thoughts down in a notebook kept by the bed.
- Meditation or sleep downloads can be found for free on the Internet. I like the free download from www.pzizz.com. I have it on my ipod and it's a great back up when I just can't relax.
- Finally, remember that if you're wound up late at night then all these pointers can help, but the true solution comes from addressing the underlying reasons for your lack of sleep. Look at the way you're eating, thinking, and conducting your day, and use the advice in all those sections to ensure you get to night time relaxed and ready for rejuvenation.

5.0.8 Action List: Sleep

1. I have the following problems with sleep

2. The main reasons I don't sleep well are:

List as many reasons as you think may be related – if you think it's affecting your sleep it probably is!

3. This is what I can and will do about it right now:

Choose at least three things to work on; more options will allow you greater success

4. This is what I plan to work on or set as a goal:

This is a back-up step; only if there's something that you see as worthwhile but don't think you can deal with just yet, i.e. getting to bed earlier when you don't get home from work until really late. But make sure you only use this step if you really don't have a choice.

Chapter 6: Digestion, Stomach Upsets, and Bloating

Ick! No one really likes to talk in detail about the inner workings of their stomach, do they? Well, maybe teenage boys do, but it's sure not a topic for everyday conversation in most circles. At least not until you are plagued by repetitive digestive disorders, find yourself intolerant to ever-more food, and just can't seem to get rid of your belly fat and bloating no matter what. But even then, many people who come to see me with digestive issues have never really thought about how it might be affecting their overall health and their weight. Perhaps you're the same. And that's fine – maybe no one has ever given you cause to think about it.

But even so - surely I don't have to tell you that if you've got troubles in this area it's sure not how things are supposed to be.

And guess what?

It's definitely going to be making you fat. It might not be the only reason, but the truth is that even if you were to eat perfectly 100% of the time, problems in your digestive system are powerful enough to override good nutrition, slow down your metabolism, and cause the number on the scales to go up .. and up .. and up. In my practice I've come across many people who fit exactly this profile, and so I know how frustrating it can be.

Unfortunately the trend I'm noticing is that increasingly more people suffer with digestive dysfunction. Bloating, stomach cramping, gassiness, poorly formed stools or constipation, these have all become the norm. It's just one reflection of the processed and fast (as in time-poor) nature of our eating habits.

6.0.1 Gluten – The Bane of Healthy Digestion

Many health experts estimate that up to 75% of westerners are intolerant or sensitive to wheat and gluten. Gluten is a protein contained within wheat and other grain products and full-blown gluten intolerance is known as Celiac Disease (CD). Both gluten sensitivity and CD have been found present in a large percentage of cancer cases, autoimmune disorders, neurological condition, back pain, fatigue cases and in people with mid-section weight gain.

I'd say all that is more than enough motivation to find out if you are intolerant to gluten and to do something about removing it from your diet – fast. In America, recent estimates show that at least 1.8 million adults have undiagnosed CD, and the number of gluten intolerant people who are not aware of it, or who are but ignore it, is certainly far greater than this. Let's make sure you're not one of them.

If you suffer from any of the following, you could be gluten intolerant or have undiagnosed Celiac's Disease.

- Respiratory problems
- Allergies
- Fatigue
- Anemia
- Osteoporosis
- Regular bloating or cramping
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- ADD
- Depression

Those with low-level intolerance may not experience any of the above symptoms. Even if you think you're safe, I'd suggest you keep reading in order to be sure, and in order to fully understand the importance of a healthy digestive system for lasting weight loss.

Some studies even indicate that all people born with blond hair and blue eyes are gluten intolerant. Scary stuff.

6.0.2 How a Grumpy Colon Makes You Fat

- Through the bloating and fluid retention that you experience most days
- By putting a pause on all metabolic functions as your body waits for your colon to clear out. Which basically never happens unless you take specific measures to repair the damage caused by poor lifestyle, eating choices or stress.
- A backed-up colon eventually gets to the point where it is so full that the (ahem) matter starts seeping back into your bloodstream. This is known as leaky gut syndrome. Disgusting? You bet. Toxic. Absolutely. And we all know what happens to toxins – your body stores them in your fat cells to protect your vital organs. This causes your fat cells to expand.
- Low-level food intolerances. Perhaps you're already one of the many people who have developed a known intolerance to gluten or lactose. Some people are born with this intolerance, but most develop it later in life. A leading cause is eating too much of the stuff! In fact, anything that you eat repetitively can start to irritate the lining of your gut wall and cause intolerance. The thing is, you may not be aware of it, or you may think the bloating and discomfort you experience is just normal. If you continue to eat foods that are irritating your digestive system, they will cause your system to slow down to the point where your body finds it very difficult to burn energy or fat. This is because all energy is being diverted to the very important process of trying to keep you healthy on the inside.
- Increased cravings for sugar. A backed-up colon not only slows your metabolism, but it causes you to feel sluggish. A natural outcome of this is to try to pick yourself up with stimulants or sweet foods.

Now those are just the ways a poorly functioning colon will affect your weight – let's take a look at the bigger picture. Digestive disorders can and do affect every aspect of your health and wellness:

- A slower metabolism
- Lower abdominal muscles will not work properly
- Low back pain likely
- Headaches, neck aches, joint aches
- Fatigue or lethargy
- Feel moody or upset
- Heavy feeling in your stomach is common

- Will lead to further food intolerances
- Can lead to irritable bowel syndrome
- Can lead to leaky gut syndrome (where food is re-absorbed into your bloodstream)
- Stops you absorbing or utilizing the nutrients from the food you eat
- This will lead to an increased appetite
- Poor energy for exercise
- Foggy or jumpy brain
- Rely on stimulants to keep you going throughout the day

Not so fun, hey? Now that I have your attention, here's the skinny on creating a well-oiled colon to give you the belly of your dreams.

As with most problems, you really need to know and understand your enemy before you can overcome it.

Digestive Dysfunction: Do You Fit the Profile?

How do you figure out whether you are in trouble digestively? Sure, if you haven't been to the toilet for three weeks, you know you have a problem. Or if your stomach balloons out after nearly every meal, you've probably guessed that something isn't right. But many people have ongoing digestive trauma without being at all aware of it.

So how do you know what's normal? If you're serious about losing weight then you need to understand your body. In days gone by, doctors would actually ask to look at what comes out in the toilet – now that our GP's won't go there, it's up to us to examine our own internal health!

6.0.3 So What Actually Causes Digestive Dysfunction?

There are many reasons for why you suffer from poor digestion, but here are some of the leading causes. Reading this list will give you an idea of where to start making improvements.

- Consumption of processed foods
- Frequent consumption of trans fats
- Frequent consumption of cheap and nasty oils like peanut oil or vegetable oil
- Eating conventional dairy products (as opposed to organic, or, even better, raw organic)
- Too much alcohol (especially under stress)
- Too much caffeine (especially under stress)
- Too much sugar (especially under stress)
- Ongoing stress of any kind
- A sleep debt
- Faulty breathing (chest or shallow breathing)
- Eating foods you are intolerant to, knowingly or unknowingly
- Over-consumption of grain products
- A case of food poisoning or severe illness, particularly if it took place in an underdeveloped country. This can cause parasites to enter your body and they will hang around for years if not dealt with.
- Insufficient 'good bacteria' in your stomach. Aside from food poisoning, a common reason for this is having had general anesthesia. You should always follow surgery with a course of pro-biotics to re-line your gut wall.

That's a pretty lengthy list and I think it's fair to assume that you can relate to at least one or two items on that list. If you are currently experiencing a faulty digestive pattern, or think that you may be, or just want to know every little detail about weight loss, then the next few pages are of particular relevance to you.

6.0.4 Basic Tips for Healthy Digestion

- You should do ‘number two’s’ daily. For the average healthy adult, you should be passing around 30 centimeters (that’s 12 inches) of fecal matter each day. It doesn’t matter if it’s in one huge lot, or two or three smaller deposits. Just remember: what goes in must come out! Otherwise it’s simply rotting and causing toxic and weight overload.
- A sign of ideal digestion and health is if what comes out has a pleasant and natural, earthy odor. It should be light to medium brown in color, and should not sink straight to the bottom. If it stinks, then you are not healthy – I tell my clients that we don’t want sinkers and we don’t want stinkers!
- Inconsistency in your toilet habits is a sign of an unhealthy system. This includes diarrhea, constipation, pellets, pale or dark colored deliveries, or parcels with food particles sticking out.
- In a healthy body, food should pass through in 17-48 hours. IF you want to test this, eat something that is naturally bright in color, like a cup of beets. Then, simply sit back and watch and wait! This is a simple way to see if things are sticking around in your body for longer than they’re welcome. If they are, you know your system is being slowed down.
- Bloating may be normal these days, but it is not how it should be. If you bloat or have stomach discomfort of any kind after eating, your digestion is impaired. This applies to any form of gassiness, regardless of where it comes out. It’s not healthy, it’s sure not pleasant, and it is making you fat.
- If you feel as though food sits in your stomach, then your digestion may be impaired. Even a generous meal should not feel as though it is sitting in your stomach hours after the event.
- If you regularly experience heartburn or acid reflux, your digestion may be impaired.
- If you regularly feel headachy, dizzy or nauseous after eating, or notice low back pain increase, then it’s likely your digestive system is not up to scratch.
- All food intolerances and allergies can lead to mal-absorption, nutritional deficiencies and will cause inflammation and irritation in your gut wall (leaky gut syndrome). Considering that these and other maladies can take place over the course of your entire lifetime, you can imagine the implications. Eventually your entire digestive system will essentially stop working. Not only will this cause mid-section and eventually full body weight gain, but has also been linked to chronic aging diseases such as cancer, arthritis and heart disease.

- When it comes to exercise and getting in shape, digestive disorders cause problems with training your abdominal muscles. These muscles follow the same neural pathway as your digestive system and what this means is that regardless of how you eat or attempt to exercise, those six-pack muscles and your deeper core muscles will not be able to flatten out or indeed do anything to strengthen your body or support your spine. This is one reason why many people with digestive disorders experience back pain.

6.0.5 Improving Your Digestion Now and Watch Your Weight Drop

I'm not a gastroenterologist and so I'm not going to start diagnosing or going into detail on a range of digestive disorders. If you suffer from a digestive problem you should see a specialist. A naturopath or gastro- specialist can be a good place to start, and you may require laboratory tests to ascertain what sort of nasty stuff is shacked up in your colon.

In the meantime, what I'm going to teach you about is one of the most common reasons for digestive dysfunction and how to immediately force improvement in this area. The advice I'm giving you here will still be useful if your digestive problems do not stem from gluten or lactose intolerance, and it's great advice for anyone wanting to lose weight regardless of how healthy their gut is.

You see, most digestive disorders evolve from unhealthy intestinal bacteria - either too much of the bad stuff, or not enough of the good stuff. Unhealthy bacteria typically thrive on starchy carbohydrate.

The problem here is fairly obvious – even if you eat nothing that you would consider processed or bad for you, I'll bet your idea of a healthy diet has always included whole-grains of some kind. In the food section I gave you many reasons for why whole-grains are not so healthy after all, but now we're going to look at an entirely new angle.

When you have digestive disorders and you continue to eat starchy carbohydrates, your problems feed into a vicious cycle of upset and internal destruction. Starchy carbs such as breads, pastas, rice, noodles and indeed any other cereal based foods may not be being properly absorbed, which in turn means that they stay in your intestinal tract and provide energy to all the nasty bacteria causing the problems in the first place. This creates even more problems as it leads to toxins and acids in your small intestine, which in turn destroy the enzymes within your digestive system and – surprise surprise – further inhibits carbohydrate absorption, increases mucous in your colon, and ever-so-surely slows down every last one of your metabolic functions.

Eating the correct foods, with a focus on carbohydrates that are easily digested (such as green veggies lightly steamed), is a great way to start some lasting improvement and finally help you lose the weight, but food alone won't repair long-term damage to your innards.

What About Fiber from Grains?

I bet you've heard that the answer to a slow-moving system is to eat more fiber. If only it were that simple. The reason fiber is recommended (whether it be in the form of fruit and veg, or whole grains, or a supplement such as psyllium husks) is because fibrous foods are said to act as an internal broom, sweeping through your colon and gathering up all the rubbish that is stored there and then dragging it out.

Now I'm not saying don't eat fibrous foods (the good ones of course, which would be green vegetables predominantly) and I'm not saying that fibrous foods won't improve your digestion. What I will say is that solely using fiber as a means to improve your digestion is like putting a whole bunch of band-aids on a life-threatening wound. It may make the problem appear better initially, but it doesn't necessarily solve anything in the long run, and may actually make things worse by furthering poor absorption, gut irritation, or leaky gut syndrome.

6.0.6 What Really Counts: Changing the Way You Eat

Healthy digestion depends on many factors, and lifestyle/eating habits are one of the most powerful. Ensure you always:

1. Chew your food slowly and take smaller bites
2. Put the fork down in between bites
3. Try using chopsticks now and then to really slow yourself down
4. Chew your water and drink your food – saliva helps to break down enzymes and digest food
5. Drink enough water for your body – follow the advice in the water section. Needless to say, constipation causes all sorts of problems, one of which is inflammation of the intestinal lining and again, leaky gut syndrome.
6. Flaxseed hulls (as opposed to whole flaxseeds) are a very effective laxative. They can be useful for chronic constipation, damage to the intestine wall from laxative use, irritable bowel, and to soothe inflammation. Sprinkle flaxseed hulls on rice, grains, salads, or any other meal of your choice or just mix them with water.

Another useful approach to tackling poor digestion is to start eating mindfully. Sounds a bit new agey, doesn't it? But actually, it's very logical and extremely beneficial. A study at Indiana State University found that mindfulness, including specific instructions to slowly savor the flavor of food and be aware of how much food is enough, helped to reduce eating binges from an average of four binges per week to one and a half and drastically reduced the effects of overeating on the digestive system. Here are some further tips for mindful eating:

- Eat in the moment – savor every bite, and don't just taste, but also smell and feel your food.
- Create a positive dining experience with a beautifully laid table, fresh flowers, or soothing music.

6.0.7 Dealing with Food Intolerance

As I've already mentioned, the most common food intolerances are milk or dairy, accounting for around 40-44% of all intolerances, and grains or gluten, accounting for around 40-60% of all intolerances.

Having said this, up to 66% of all irritable bowel syndrome patients have more than one food intolerance. If you suspect you may have food intolerances, you should be tested at a reputable allergy centre and seek the help of a qualified practitioner to aid you with an elimination diet. In the meantime, the recommendations I've given you so far will certainly help, as will the following information -

The first thing to find out is if you are, in fact, intolerant. Allergy testing can do this, but your body can also provide you with information indicating food intolerance. If you bloat or cramp immediately after eating a certain food, then that's a pretty sure sign, and you should follow the two-week test elimination test outlined in the grains section (page 61).

If you want to check out whether you are intolerant to something, try this test. I've found it extremely accurate.

1. Measure your resting heart rate. Do this by finding your pulse on your rest. Sit down and measure how many beats for 15 seconds.
2. Multiply this number by 4 to find your resting pulse rate.
3. Next, eat the food you suspect you are intolerant to.
4. One minute later, re-test your resting pulse rate. If it has increased or lowered by more than 4 beats per minute, there is a strong likelihood you are intolerant to that food.
5. Give it the two-week test and your body will tell you for sure! The intolerance test is best done in the morning, before you have changed your resting heart rate too much with coffee or other stimulants.

You've already learned that most people with digestive upset are also low in good bacteria. I bet you didn't realize that your digestive system actually has over 400 different kinds of bacteria, comprising roughly 10 pounds of your body weight.

Of course, not all bacteria are bad. You've probably seen ads for yogurt promoting good bacteria such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifid bacterium bifidum*. These are what are known as probiotic bacteria. They help to maintain intestinal health and in turn aid in a healthy metabolism. Unfortunately though, restoring intestinal health is not as simple as eating more yogurt. This is partly due to the reasons discussed in the dairy section, and also because many commercial yogurts

are high in sugar. A good raw milk yogurt may be useful, but if it's not raw than you need to look for brands that add live bacteria after the pasteurization process.

A simpler approach is to opt for pro-biotics in supplement form. These are readily available at your health food store. Choose dairy free capsules, and be sure to store them in the fridge. They should be taken at least half an hour before eating to optimize digestion.

Good quality pro-biotics will often immediately ease the symptoms of IBS, diarrhea, gas or bloating, yeast infections and bad breath and in the long- term they will assist you to return to full health, ideal digestion and belly fat reduction.

Other Ways You Can Improve Your Digestion

- Another very cheap and useful supplement that has been shown to help with poor digestion is peppermint oil. It can reduce abdominal pain, bloating and gas, and is also very useful for heartburn.
- Digestive enzyme supplements are also paramount to restoration. They add back in some of the enzymes that have been destroyed, and again help your body to do what should be a natural job. You should **look for enzymes containing HCL, gentian root extract, and pepsin**. Do not buy off-the-shelf supplements as they are generally not broken down and you may as well throw your money away. Instead, consult a reputable health practitioner for a practitioner brand or specialty mix.
- Of course nutrition is one of the most powerful ways to influence every function of your body for better or for worse. So even though you may have ended up in this section before the food section, it's going to be crucially important to you to pay attention to everything in there once you get to it.
- Keep a digestion journal to chart your progress – just a few quick notes each day on your toilet habits, stomach reactions, and the way they make you feel after meals. You can add this to the bottom of the included food diary if you like. This can be useful just for you, but will also be very helpful to any practitioner you do choose to visit.
- Follow all the advice in the food section. In particular, avoid processed foods, trans fats, and cheap vegetable oils. Conventional dairy products are also a no-no. Follow the elimination test (grain test) by cutting these out **completely** for two weeks, and then add them back in. I guarantee this will give you some pretty clear feedback as to what they're doing to your body!
- Alcohol, caffeine, sugar and other stimulants should also be given the two-week test. Actually I go so far as to recommend my clients cut all these foods out for three months in order to fully repair their digestive system. Before you flip out at the idea of being that strict, try the two-week test. If you add the food or stimulant back in and experience digestive problems straight away, then you know that this was the cause. If you're truly serious about restoring health and losing weight, you're just going to have to bite the bullet and cut them out for three months. Hey – no one ever said this would be easy, but it does work. It's sure better than a lifetime of faulty digestion and a bloated belly.
- See the stress section for tips on restoring calm and balance to your body.
- See the sleep section for an understanding of the true impact of a sleep debt on your weight.

- Faulty breathing (chest or shallow breathing). Did you know that correct breathing should actually be into your 'stomach' and through your nose? Do you even know how you breathe? Many adults – due to stress and poor posture – breathe in a limited and incorrect fashion. Not only does this exacerbate stress and poor posture, it shuts off your lower abdominals and your digestive system and is therefore directly related to a soft flabby belly! Practice lying on your back breathing through your nose, with your hand on your stomach as a reminder to direct the breath to this region. This may feel tricky at first, and take a little practice, but it's worth it. Not only will you begin to feel calmer immediately, your digestive system will thank you, and it's just another piece in the weight loss puzzle.
- Avoid over-consumption of grain products. Because grain products are commonly over-consumed, many people become intolerant to them. This does not mean you have a gluten intolerance (although you may), it just means check it out. Give it the two-week test to be certain.
- You are not what you eat, but actually what you digest and absorb. Your natural production of enzymes decreases as you age. Foods high in enzymes include raw honey, raw or pickled vegetables, raw or cultured milk and cheese, and some raw fruits such as bananas, pineapple and papaya.
- Good bacteria in your gut manufacture omega-3 acids, vitamin K, and the B vitamins and can also decrease cholesterol as well as intestinal inflammation and food allergies. Not only this, but good bacteria enhances your liver function and makes up about 75% of your immune cells. Prescription antibiotics, general anesthetic and gut irritability can all kill off good bacteria. The scary thing is that even eating meat from animals that have been fed antibiotics can kill good bacteria – just another reason to choose organic. Fluoride and chlorine in your water have a similar effect, so it's important to replenish daily, through correct food, filtered water, and appropriate supplementation.
- Cultured and fermented foods (not soy) including kefir, organic or raw full-fat yogurt and kombucha are helpful to restoring healthy bacteria.

Building a healthy intestinal system is by no means a simple or quick task, and in severe or unresolved cases I'd still recommend working with your specialist health practitioner. Whether or not you choose to do so, following the recommendations just discussed is a sure-fire way to set things on the right track. Be sure to fill out your digestive requirements on the following page.

6.0.8 Action List: Digestion

What are the signs of 'faulty digestion' that you can pinpoint in your own body?

List anything that seems possible after what you have now learned.

Of these, which are the two most debilitating and/or harmful to your health and weight loss cause?

Why do you think these are an issue for you? Can you pinpoint something you're doing that could be causing it or making it worse?

What are you going to do about it (starting today)? What do you still need help figuring out or overcoming?

Be sure to note down where you might seek help

Other comments

Chapter 7: Motivation and Self-Belief

"If you realized how powerful your thoughts are, you would never think a negative thought. They can have a powerful influence for good when they're on the positive side, and they can and do make you physically ill when they're on the negative side."

Peace Pilgrim

Have you ever noticed how tough it can be to stay motivated when you're trying to starve yourself or restrict the things you love? How your self-belief shoots straight out the window as soon as the designated diet period is over and the pounds start creeping back on?

Not only do diets based on deprivation not work, they generally cause you to feel really bad about your lack of willpower. It's important that you realize and believe right now that this is not your fault. Losing weight does not depend upon willpower. Sure, determination is a part of it, but successful and long-term weight loss is more about knowing what works best for you. Without motivation and a dash of self-belief, it's pretty tough to bother figuring out the answer in the first place. Motivation is what gets you started, habit and increasing knowledge keep you going, and the need for willpower becomes a thing of the past.

In order to harness your motivation and retain your self-belief, you absolutely must set goals for yourself. I'm sure you've heard the old story about the group of college students asked to set goals. Only 7% did so. A few decades later the entire group was questioned and it was found that the 7% between them had more wealth than the remaining 93%. This is a true story and its message rings true to creating any type of success in your life. There are numerous ways you can goal-set, and I strongly encourage you to find the way that best works for you.

Here's a system that I've found highly effective.

- Decide exactly what you want to look like and how you want to feel. Write it down in order to be as specific as possible
- Make sure that this is really what you want
- Set exact goals
- Visualize how you will feel and look once you've achieved those goals
- Believe it's possible
- Start now

That's just an overview and I'll break it down for you in a moment. Before I get to that, there's one quick point I'd like to make, and that is this. I know I told you at the beginning of this book that I'm

not going to get all gooey and mushy about the 'you can do it' stuff. I mean, the truth is that you can do it, but at the end of the day, you either will or you won't. The thing is, there's a significant difference between 'I know I can, I think I can', and deliberate goal setting or support-seeking.

With your busy life and a history of up-and-down successes or failures in the weight loss arena, it really is crucial that you have a system to lean on. That system might be step-by-step goals, or support from people around you, the aid of an on or offline coach, or even an online community.

When it comes to creating real motivation and self-belief I'd go so far as to say that if you don't have this stuff in place, then it doesn't matter what you eat or do in the gym. You still won't get to where you want to be.

That's how powerful the mind is.

No, I'm not talking about getting slim purely from 'believing that you can', but it is an important factor, if for no other reason than that your thoughts drive your actions.

You may have heard this saying before. It's one of my favorites because I've seen it to be true in my own life and in that of others:

Sow a thought, reap an action
Sow an action, reap a habit
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny

A bit scary when you think about it, isn't it? Or incredibly powerful of course! I guess it depends on how you want to look at it. The point is that the way you think and feel about yourself and your chances of weight loss success can and will directly influence your ability to lose that weight. Much of the way you think comes directly from within you. But of course other people and outside stimuli also play their part. Which is why we're going to delve deep into both those areas.

7.0.1 Your Negative Thoughts are Making You Fat

Let's cut to the chase.

How do you really feel about your goal to lose weight? Deep, deep down? Do you believe you can do it? That nothing and nobody will stop you from reaching your goal, that it's merely a matter of time before you create the body of your dreams? Or do you think you'd be able to do it if it weren't for this, or for that? Or that hopefully you'll get there, but you don't want to pin all your hopes on that certainty.

Maybe you have solid explanations for why you don't achieve your goals – your genes, or your work demands, or your busy family life. Or perhaps it's just that deep down, part of you feels resigned to being the way you are.

Take this book, for instance.

When you bought it, made the download, and began reading, what were you thinking to yourself? Were you filled with hope and excitement, and focused on the fact that this could be the answer to your problems? Or were you thinking to yourself that you're probably just throwing your money away but you'd give it a go anyway?

How about now, now that you've read this far – does the information and advice I've given you seem promising? Do you believe that you can lose weight if you simply follow the steps I've shown you? Or have you already scoffed at half of what you've read – convinced that it makes no sense, or can't be that simple, or is not realistic, or – whatever?

Let me tell you about a client of mine.

I saw this girl several times a week for around two years. She was a Personal Training client of mine. Between the workouts she did with me, and what she did on her own, she exercised around five to six days per week.

She also followed a fairly strict diet. Sure, she had a few drinks now and then and let loose on the food as we all do on occasion, but mostly she ate quite well.

She never lost any weight. Not in two years of following this strict and rigorous schedule.

In fact, if anything, she gained weight in the time I knew her. Believe me, I feel fine with sharing this story with you, because the vast majority of my clients do get the results they want. Then again, the vast majority of clients I attract to me are positive minded and focused on the picture in their head of how they're going to look. They believe that they have the potential to achieve their goals.

This girl was the opposite from day one. In fact, even at our first meeting she told me straight out how she was incapable of losing weight.

I'm not downplaying the frustration that you feel at having tried everything to lose weight and still not having achieved it. Believe me, I know from my own previous experience how frustrating that is. What I'm saying is, that if there's no hope, no self-belief, then – there's no chance.

The amazing thing with this client was that she stuck pretty well – as good as I'd expect of anyone, myself included – to her exercise and diet goals. And yet the power of her mind was strong enough to stop her losing weight.

This isn't just a concept I've come up with or observed myself. There is research to show that your body believes your thoughts. That if you tell yourself you are fat, or will always be fat, or don't believe you can be happy or in great shape, then this will be your reality.

Your mind is an incredibly powerful tool. How do you choose to use it? Have you even read the manual? Or are you – whether you realize it or not – stuck in negative self-talk patterns that block every chance of success you'll ever have?

Think about it. We've all known someone who believes men are bad, or evil, or all lie. What sort of man does that person inevitably attract? It's the same with money – the people who have a lot of it generally tend to believe they deserve or are capable of earning a lot. Whereas those who believe life is supposed to be hard usually find it to be that way.

Do you see what I'm saying?

How about someone whose entire family is overweight and believes that they just have bad genes? Yep, they often end up struggling with obesity for their entire lives. Maybe this is even you. And yet I've met plenty of people who are the one slim person in their family – because they made a decision to choose to control their physical being, and they believed they could achieve their goals.

Like it or not, your thoughts and beliefs are not just an airy-fairy thing in your head. The way you think and feel actually affects every aspect of your physiology. It has a direct impact on your hormones, your metabolism, your physical and emotional strength, your cell growth and recovery, and even how long you might live. You've probably heard of the idea of people dying from a broken heart, but did you know it's actually possible? When people truly believe that they can't go on living, then in the end that is exactly what happens.

Same rule applies with your weight.

Ask yourself the hard questions now – do you truly believe you can lose weight and that you deserve to lose weight and be happy?

It's okay to admit that you don't have the self-belief. Getting hold of a powerful and life-changing mindset isn't quite as simple as flicking a switch. Just think of it like setting a physical goal, say to run a mile in a certain time. You'll need to do some training, gain some understanding, and be consistent in your preparation for meeting your goal of new thoughts and beliefs.

And you'll need to remember that you are your future, not your past. But to help you deal with and release your past, it can be helpful to make a timeline of events and memories that you believe have affected your weight and your confidence.

7.0.2 Building Extreme Confidence and Motivation

One of the toughest things is forcing yourself to do the right thing, to follow my or anyone's advice when you just don't feel like it. And to a certain extent, it is about 'just doing it'. But here are some ways you can optimize your weight loss and restore your motivation. Copy the ones that appeal to you in to your journal - choose at least 3.

- Take some advice from Jerry Seinfeld. Get a 30-day calendar and mark with a big red 'X' every day that you stick to your goals. For some reason, being able to keep the X's going is a powerful motivating technique.
- Become accountable. Make an agreement with a friend that you will give them \$10 (or an amount that means something to you) for every day you go off track. Or give them the \$10 per day in advance for each week, and they have to give it back to you each day that you stay on track. \$10 is just an example - the amount needs to be significant enough to motivate you to action.
- Start an online journal or blog for your friends or the public and commit to recording your weight loss journey daily. Alternatively you can join a forum, although this may not keep you as accountable. Hey, you could even end up making money from a weight loss blog if you decide to really invest some time into quality content and marketing! Now that would be a cool bonus.
- Be consistent and follow the plan. When all else fails, find reassurance in sticking to daily routines, like always exercising. Even if it's just a 10- minute walk. Not only will this consistency help you move closer to your goals, it will give you back some self-belief as you keep your promises to yourself.
- Start small. Motivation and self-belief comes from knowing we will come through for ourselves. If you don't think you can stick to eating perfectly for a week, then face that fact and set a goal you can achieve. Maybe you can do things perfectly for a day? Or how about for every breakfast for a week?
- Write things down. If you set a goal, write it in your weight loss journal. If you are afraid you will stray into temptation, write it in your journal, along with how you will feel if you do go off track, compared to how you will feel if you stay on track. The act of writing is an incredibly powerful way of clarifying your thoughts, reminding yourself of the importance of your goals, and restoring motivation.
- Hire a trainer or coach to help you out or just to talk to. Paying someone each week can be a powerful way to keep you on track in between, whether you want to or not.

- Take photos of yourself in your underwear (in the mirror if you don't want someone else to do it), and look at them every day. Write down why you are determined to no longer be that person. I highly suggest you take photos whether you want to or not – so many people I've consulted to over the years regret not having 'before' shots of themselves. If you'd rather just using snaps rather than underwear shots, that's fine as well.
- Make a list of all the things you can do to care for your body and show yourself that you love you, and deserve success. I know this sounds corny but it really is a worthwhile exercise. Do it right now in your journal. Don't stop until you have at least 25 items either big or small.
- Enlist support. Decide who you need to stop spending time with. Are there people around you cutting you down? Are you surrounded with negativity, with 'you can't do it'? You need to get that out of your life now. Instead, deliberately choose to surround yourself with positive attitudes and willing support. If you can't find that in the people around you, you certainly will find it on any number of weight loss forums. Just search on Google until you find one you like. That aside, I'd seriously consider some new friends. Joining a community gym is one good way to meet like-minded people. Support is such an important part of your journey that I've covered it in more detail further along.
- Overcome negative or irrational thinking. If you're not sure whether you struggle with this try recording your thoughts. Ask yourself why you think the way that you do. Where does this negativity come from? Is there another way to look at it? Imagine saying to a close friend or a child what you say to yourself. You never would, would you? Think about what you are doing to your own self-esteem.
- Practice thought reversal. For every negative thought you have about yourself, force yourself to turn it around. The best place to do this is in your journal. Don't close it until the task is done. For example, rather than thinking 'my thighs are so chunky, think 'I can start changing my body now by applying the new information I've learned from this book.

Can you see how a little practice and training can reverse even the most negative of thinking and belief patterns?

7.0.3 How to Set Goals for Success

Let's talk a little more about goal setting. We haven't quite gotten down to the nitty-gritty of it yet because I want you to go through the process of re-affirming your self-belief first. I've found this to be the most effective way of ensuring that you create positive and realistic goals. Here's what you need to do.

1. First, answer this question. What is realistic for you? Write it down in your journal. If you're built with wide hips and small breasts than it's unlikely you'll ever achieve a Cindy Crawford physique. When you think about your goals ensure they are positive and challenging but still within the realms of possibility.
2. Is there a history of being overweight in your family? I'm not worried about this for genetic reasons, more because it could mean that you're family won't understand your efforts or think that you're doomed to failure. It's important that you mentally separate your attitude from theirs. Remind yourself every day (either verbally or in writing. I find post-it notes on the mirror or fridge work well) that you are worthy, capable, informed, and that you are already on your way to transforming your body. Refuse to entertain negativity from others and they will eventually get the message.
3. What are you happy with about yourself? Use these things (they don't have to be just physical) to form an initial idea of what sort of physique you can eventually visualize yourself having. Write it all down.
4. What is the lowest weight you have maintained as an adult for at least one year? If you've never been at a weight you were happy with then skip this step, but if you can think back to a time when you were happy, you can use that picture (an actual photo, or just a mental image), along with any old clothes from that era, as a reference point to remind yourself why you're doing all this.

7.0.4 Weight Loss Without Support

Let's face it. Any goal is made easier when you know that someone is helping out or encouraging you to get there. And it's particularly great to know that your family and friends are excited about your impending success, and are there for you along the way.

But that's not always the case. Unfortunately, many people I meet find that those closest to them are not only somewhat unsupportive, but even seem to sabotage their success. There are many reasons why this might be so – more often than not it stems from their own insecurities. It's hard to change other people but you can try:

- Ask for some of their time to talk about something that's very important to you
- Explain that you love or value them as an important person in your life, and that you've always admired/respected them for 'x' and therefore value their input in your life
- Tell them you are excited about your plan to lose weight and believe you can do it
- Tell them that it's a tough journey, and you can't do it on your own
- Say that you see them as someone who could be of help to you in giving you motivation, accountability, or just silent support
- Ask if they're aware that you felt as though they didn't think you could or should lose weight. Many people will be shocked that you've perceived this as it wasn't their intention.

I find this works with many people. Unfortunately, however, some people are just genuinely unsupportive, and this is when you need to look for outside help. You can:

- Pay for motivation and support by hiring a trainer or coach. This can be done online or in person. Many will offer different options, from one- on-one consultations weekly, to monthly catch-ups or even group work, which may be more affordable.
- Find it free online by joining a weight loss forum. This is a supportive environment filled with people who are going through what you are going through. Just keep in mind that some nutrition or weight loss advice will conflict with what you now know. Focus on the support side of things.
- Find it in your community by visiting a gym or community group where you know people are also looking to lose weight. Even if you don't talk to others, seeing others who are also striving to reach their goals can help you to feel less alone.

- Research it by visiting your local library or bookstore and reading books on motivation, success and self-help.

7.0.5 Is Weight Loss Truly a Priority for You?

Even with all the motivation, self-belief, and goal setting in the world, I'm sorry to say that you cannot simply think your way to losing weight. This might sound as though I'm negating everything I've just said, but all I'm saying is that this stuff alone will not get the job done.

While your thoughts and beliefs are incredibly powerful, they are just one piece of the puzzle. So how do you know if your positive thoughts are turning into the right sort of actions to ensure weight loss success? Here's how to make losing weight your top priority – and mean it:

1. Create daily habits and follow a pre-planned routine.
2. Come to love the structure of doing certain things every day – for example, making exercise part of every morning.
3. Make this a 'no matter what', as in 'no matter what, I will not have mashed potatoes with my dinner when we go out tonight because it's not my cheat day'. It's important that you give yourself a reason or you'll just justify your way out of it.
4. Use sacrifice as a motivator. Choose something that's generally quite important to you. For example, a good sacrifice for me would be to give up buying coffee out. Make the sacrifice until you've stuck to your plan for a solid month.
5. Ignore 'I can't be bothered'. This will get you nowhere. Instead, commit to doing at least 10 minutes of a planned activity or preparing at least one healthy meal, and you'll find the rest will follow.
6. Be willing to ask for help. Don't imagine that you're strong enough to go it alone. Everyone needs a shoulder to lean on now and then.
7. Look for solutions rather than giving up when something is not working or feels too tough. Consider the areas where you haven't been as strict as you planned. Make sure you apply every part of this. Consider also that it could take over a month (a strict month) to see change. After all, you're undoing how many months of poor eating habits? It's useful to measure your chest, waist and hips as well as to weigh yourself every week. Always do it at the same time of day, on the same day, and record your results in your journal. This is an important way to be accountable, and I've found that those who measure and weigh once a week get better results. Any more often than that is not necessary and could even become a negative thing.
8. Remind yourself what it means to you to stay on track and achieve your goals. Write down your 'whys' whenever you get down or de-motivated.

7.0.6 Create a Dream and a Vision – What Really Matters?

If you don't know what's important to you, then you will be easily swayed by the opinions or bad habits of others. Maybe even by their good habits, but that's not the point. The point is, you need to know who you are and what truly matters to you if you want to have a true shot at living a life that brings you not only success, but also happiness and peace of mind.

So how do you work out what your values are, what really matters to you, and why?

- Start by listing your top five material desires. Be as indulgent as you like. Do it now in your journal.
- Now record the five experiences you'd most like to have. In this case it's fine to list things that you don't think are realistic – like reaching the North Pole, but make sure they are things that you truly wish to do.
- Next, write down the five things that matter most to you – this might be a possession or a person, or it could be a characteristic, like honesty or compassion.
- Finally, make a note of the top five things you'd like to be – whether it's a mother, or fluent at German, a certain clothing size, or the President. Be as far-fetched as you like, but be honest.
- Go back to each point on your list. Make a table with four columns. The first column has the item, the second has the title 'why is this important to me?', the third 'how do I mean?' and the last 'define importance further'
- Fill in the columns. Be ruthlessly honest. You really need to peel away the layers for each point. For example – do you want that showroom car because you just love cars, or because you could never afford that sort of luxury growing up and want to show your parents you've escaped them, or because you want your neighbors and colleagues to think you're powerful and cool, or because you want to impress someone? Take the time to think about the deeper reasons behind your desires.

Your reasons and explanations for things give you powerful information about your values and what is really important to you, and you can use this information in two ways.

1. To evaluate whether you are living by your principles.
2. As a tool to find new ways to motivate yourself toward losing weight and/or achieving other goals.

7.0.7 A Mission, A Vision, and Long-Term Plans for Success

A year or so back I came across a great strategy for goal setting. I wish I could remember where I found this, as I'd like to give credit! I've used it in my personal life, for my blog, for my Personal Training business, and even to get this book finished.

Of course weight loss is the primary goal that we're discussing but you'll find that going through this process will naturally bring in other elements of your life, which is definitely a bonus. After all, no one part of you can be separated from another, can it? This is how it works.

You need to start by deciding on your mission. Your mission is the why. It should be a paragraph or so long, and should answer the question "why do you want to lose weight?" Write it out in full, as in "I want to lose weight because 'x'". Answers should include how you want to feel, but also how that success might change your life.

Next, take a paragraph to work out your vision. Your vision is your objective for your health and body for the next 3 years. It should include specifics – how much weight you want to lose, how certain parts of your body will look and feel, how you will feel and how you will live your life.

The next step is to define 3-4 goals. Choose goals that are for achieving around a year from now. Your goals should define how you will know you're reaching your vision.

Strategies come after goals. Put at least 4-5 strategies into place. Strategies are the major changes that you need to make in order to meet your goals.

This might include things as simple as going for a weekly fresh food shop with a pre-prepared list.

Finally, create an action plan. These are the smaller more detailed steps you need to put into place in order to meet your strategies. For example, write a shopping list every Monday. Or get the kids looked after on Tuesday mornings so you can get the shopping done or a workout in.

And that's it. Pretty simple really. I hope you'll start setting your goals now using the tools I've just given you. I'd strongly suggest you go through all the steps in the previous section right away, and at least roughly define your mission and vision right away. Depending on how much of the rest of this book you've already read, you may be ready to finish your goal-setting process right away, or you may need to wait until you've learned more about your personalized weight loss requirements. As always, use your journal for all your goal setting.

7.0.8 Controlling Temptation and Bad Influence

Sometimes, despite the best of intentions, we find ourselves irresistibly drawn to eating or doing something that we know is going to damage the hard work we've done so far. And I'll be the first to say there's nothing wrong with 'cheating' on your plan from time to time. As long as it really is from time to time. When you're in weight loss mode, this should be 10% of the time, max.

So how do you resist temptation or bad influence the rest of the time? It's all about having a plan, reminding yourself you have a plan, and then (you guessed it!) doing your very very best to follow the plan.

- Carry your notebook everywhere. When you feel tempted, escape to a secluded area (like the bathroom) and re-read some of your goals and plans, or write down why you are determined to stay on track. This can help re-focus your brain toward positive progression.
- Identify common tempters or bad influences and cut them out of your life. If you always eat sweets at the movies, make sure you don't go too often until you can get a handle on it. If a certain person always force-feeds you, ask them to stop sabotaging your goals (be direct and honest but thank them for always being so generous), or stop spending time with them.
- If you give in and buy junk food and then can't stop eating it, do the old Miranda from Sex and the City trick, and cover it in dishwashing detergent. Mash it up with the liquid just to be sure you don't get any ideas about cutting off the affected area.
- If you really can't resist, just get outta there. Leave the room, the building, or even the suburb if necessary.
- Keep yourself busy. If 3pm is always office treat time, take yourself on an errand or visit the basement filing room. Stay away from the potential crime scene until it's safe to return. Tell people not to save you any before you leave.

7.0.9 Making Weight Loss Worth It

It would be nice to think that end goal of actually controlling your weight would be motivation enough, but that's not really realistic, is it? It can make things a whole lot easier and nicer for you if you give yourself a few ways of making it all worthwhile.

If you're doing the hard yards, and you still have a ways to go to lose all your weight, then start setting yourself some small rewards along the way. You can use these as daily or weekly rewards, or just random rewards if you really go above and beyond. Or you might like to use a points system – 10 points for every good day, and minus 10 for every bad day. When you get to 50, you get a treat.

We are all motivated (in everything) by either pain or pleasure, so here are some pleasurable ways to motivate yourself:

- Take yourself on a date
- Buy a new book or CD or DVD
- Buy yourself a \$10 gift voucher for your favorite store – add them up until you can reward yourself with something great
- Go for a massage
- Have a cheat meal
- Hire a house cleaner for a one off if it's not something you'd usually do
- Go for a nice coffee at a beautiful hotel
- Start listing which clothes you are soon going to throw out as they become too big or set out some old clothes that you'll soon fit back into
- Get your hair done
- Have a facial or give yourself a facial
- Brag about yourself a little

Now let's look at the flipside – motivation through pain. I'd like you to come up with your own list of painful ways to motivate yourself (these are called consequences). This could be something like skipping an event you were looking forward to or giving your personal spending money to your partner when you don't stick to your plan. Come up with at least 10. Don't make your rewards or consequences dependant on losing a certain amount of weight, but make them based on sticking

to your routine or strictly following a certain piece of this book. Use trial and error to find out what best motivates you – if it's pain then that's just what you're going to have to use!

7.0.10 Action List: Motivation and Self-Belief

Ask yourself these questions:

When it comes to self-belief and motivation, the areas that I struggle with internally are –

List all that apply – even just a little bit

The outside factors that seem to affect me most are –

Again, be sure to note everything that is relevant

I am willing to do at least these 3 things starting today in order to stay on track -

This area just seems too hard for me to deal with right now –

I am going to seek support and build up my confidence in myself starting today, and I'm going to do it by –

List at least one item here, but more is certainly fine

Chapter 8: Patterns of Behavior

Have you ever said to yourself “I’m doing all the right things, so why can’t I lose weight?”

If you’ve ever tried any diet without lasting success, I’ll bet you’ve at least thought something along those lines. The reason for that constant frustration could be pretty simple, and (in this part of the book at least) it has nothing to do with the merits of one diet over another.

You see, even if you are eating right most of the time, your eating habits and patterns may be destructive enough to cause you to be overweight. Up until now you’ve probably had no or very little idea just how detrimental some of your habits have been to your weight loss goals.

The good news?

Some of this stuff is ridiculously easy to change, but these small tweaks can have a tremendous impact on your metabolic efficiency and body fat reduction.

8.0.1 Signs of Internal Dysfunction in Your Body

- You have no appetite in the morning. In fact, the thought of eating until you've been up for hours makes you nauseous.
- You can easily forget about meals if you're busy or on the go. It's no big deal if you skip lunch, or dinner, or maybe even both.
- Even when you're starving, you feel full after just a tiny amount of food. And then it feels as though it sits in your gut for hours.
- You get headaches or feel sick after eating
- You don't mind at all if you're so busy that you only have time for a coffee, an energy drink or a couple of sweets instead of a meal. In fact, sometimes that just seems easier, and you feel pretty good on it anyway.

All of these are indicators that your metabolism is below par. That your digestive system is backed up, your liver is over-worked, and your hormones are nowhere near as balanced as we'd like them to be for optimal health and energy.

I want to talk about one of the above points in more detail – it's extremely relevant to your weight loss success and is an area that many people struggle with. The advice in this next section can be applied to any time of day to help kick-start your metabolism and your energy.

8.0.2 Breakfast Rules

Are you about sick of people telling you that you **MUST** eat breakfast when there's nothing you'd less like to do? When you just can't stomach food in the morning because it makes you feel nauseous or you simply don't have an appetite? I bet most people you've spoken to on the topic have ignored this and just blasted you with all the reasons why you **Must Eat Breakfast**.

"Breaky will kick-start your metabolism".

"It will stop you craving junk food later in the day".

"It will give you energy and focus to perform better throughout the day".

"You should eat breakfast like a king, etc, etc, etc ...".

Of course if you thought I was going to reassure you that you don't need breaky, you'd be sorely mistaken. The truth is that all of those statements are true. And here's a nice little piece of info for you: over the past ten years I've trained close to 1,000 people one on one for different periods of time. I'd say roughly 30% of them weren't eating breaky when we started.

None of them lost the weight they wanted to until they ate breakfast. No exceptions.

Food for thought, wouldn't you say? So the truth is that all those annoying folks are pretty much on target. But here's what I bet you (or they) didn't know though.

Improving your metabolism, health or energy is not quite as simple as forcing food down. First, it helps to understand why you can't stomach food.

Why You Don't Get Hungry in The Morning

No appetite or no desire for food in the morning is a sign of excess cortisol (that's your stress hormone, remember). What this means is that your body is holding so much stress that it was not able to recover effectively throughout the night. Your hectic or stress-driven lifestyle – or just too many coffees - has charged you up so well throughout the day that your body (your hormonal system) just can't wind down.

The result?

Your sleep rhythms are out of whack.

Here's what should happen. When daylight hits your peepers your body should be well rested and able to release a fresh bout of stress hormones. In a good way – to get you going for the day. A natural outcome of this would be a healthy appetite.

I'm guessing that if you're in the no-breaky club, then you're also someone who starts the day feeling a little slow. Well, no wonder! What goes up must come down, and if the down part didn't happen for you during the night then it's no surprise that a coffee or juice appeals more than real food the next morning.

The answer is plain and simple: you need to de-stress. The fact that you don't want breaky is simply a symptom of a bigger problem. And I mean that literally, because as you already know, too much cortisol causes your body to store fat. As fast as possible. There's no escape.

8.0.3 Five Ways to De-Stress and Kick-Start Your Metabolism

1. Cut the caffeine after 12pm. No excuses.
2. Avoid alcohol and sugars after dinner. A glass of red before or with dinner is fine.
3. Reflect. Sick of being on fast-forward all the time? Schedule 15 minutes in your day to do nothing. Preferably lying or sitting with your eyes closed. (This doesn't mean check Facebook or text friends. NOTHING).
4. Download a free energizing soundtrack from www.pzizz.com. Put it on your Ipod and listen to it on the way in to work, or on the way home. Much better than blasting your nervous system with pop music. You might enjoy it, but it won't relax the inner you.
5. Schedule a treat for yourself. Even if it's a month away, a massage appointment or even a movie date with a friend can be something to look forward to and help you smile in the flurry of life.

And finally? Well, I'm sure you already guessed – eat something in the morning. Try a piece of fruit with a boiled egg, or even (God forbid!) some plain toast to start. Just be sure to graduate to a protein and fat based breakfast as soon as possible. Because you sure aren't giving your body a chance if you don't provide it with a little equipment.

8.0.4 Waking Up Your Metabolism

Think of your metabolism as a naughty puppy. You know that in theory it's possible to train it to do what you want, but you have to face up to the fact that it might take some work. Showing your body how it's done just once is not enough. Practice makes perfect! Eventually, you can automate your metabolism to do what you want, when you want. By this stage you'll have an extremely high awareness of your body and will know intrinsically how to eat, move and behave in order to continue to live in the body of your dreams. When you get to this point, things become easy, and you get to enjoy all the fun aspects of food and exercise, just as a seasoned puppy trainer gets to the point where they know they can let the dog off the lead without causing utter havoc.

The best place to start is by re-setting your body clock as soon as you wake up.

There are numerous ways to do this and I'd suggest trying all of them, maybe one each week until you work out what's best for you.

1. If you're not hungry in the morning, jump out of bed 15 minutes earlier and fast walk around the block, or do half an hour of an exercise DVD, or just run around your backyard like a crazy person. A little activity first thing in the morning will not only add to your overall exercise in a simple and easy to achieve way, it will kick-start your metabolism into action and ensure it runs at top speed all day long.
2. Drink 2 glasses of tepid water as soon as you're awake. Add a little lemon if you choose. This will stimulate your digestion, making room for breakfast. Stimulation of the digestive system will, in turn, kick-start your metabolism.
3. Avoid or absolutely minimize coffee, caffeinated tea, energy drinks or sugar for at least 2 weeks, or until you notice a change in your appetite and energy. You need to eat to lose weight, and stimulants such as these can suppress your appetite and tell your body to store fat faster. I know this is hard to do, but keep your mind focused on how much the end result is worth to you.
4. Do some gentle stretching first thing in the morning. This is just another way to stimulate digestion. Any stretching is fine, but one of my favorites first thing is to lie on my back, bring my knees to my chest, and hug them in toward my body. Pull them slightly out and around the sides of your torso. If this is difficult to do, do it daily until it becomes easier! The pressure of your thighs on your abdomen will stimulate your colon.
5. Ensure you follow the advice in the sleep section. Poor quality sleep will mean that your metabolism and fat-burning hormones do not function well the next day. This is because your body is not recovered and has not been able to release them effectively.

6. Get organized. Always bring a healthy lunch and snacks with you, whether it's to work or just out and about. If you don't have food with you, you must have a plan for where you will buy your food, and be certain that you will be able to make sound choices. Being prepared will ensure you don't resort to coffees and snack bars.

8.0.5 Healthy Eating While Out or On-The-Go

- Call ahead to find out if they serve foods that you can eat
- Leave things on your plate if eating them will disrupt your plan or they are not the right foods
- Ordering side dishes can be a good way of ensuring correct foods in your meal
- Order sauces/gravies/dressings on the side so that you can control your meal yourself – remember these are all carbohydrates and are often full of sugars, table salt and other undesirables
- Remember that alcohol counts as carbohydrate so don't go beyond the usual recommended amount of 1-2 standard glasses (wine only)
- Know in advance what your options will be. This may include calling hotels/restaurants to determine food choices and locate health food stores.
- You can pack hard-boiled eggs, nuts, perhaps even fruits, etc for snacks on the plane or road
- If you are able to take a cooler bag, you can carry your meals with you
- Don't be afraid to tell restaurants exactly what you want, i.e. if you want sauce on the side, or the sauce from the chicken on your steak. Be picky – this is your body!
- Don't fall into the trap of drinking more alcohol than usual just because you are eating out more frequently
- Carry a list of your health and wellness goals (take your journal) as motivation to stay committed to your diet plan

8.0.6 Portion Control

Did you know that both over-eaters and under-eaters have the same problem in common? They are teaching their bodies to store fat faster. Not only this, they have no true awareness of their needs, and have lost the ability to listen in to how much – or little – food they need to feel satisfied.

When you eat the right balance of foods for your body, and start to listen in to the feedback your body gives you (using your Food Diary for guidance), you will start to gain an awareness of when you are truly satisfied. In many people, this will mean eating less food overall as they focus on quality and balance rather than even thinking about how much food they have eaten, nor caring whether there is more in front of them.

The first step is to be sure to follow the advice in the food section to the letter, but you must also consider the following when you eat the right foods for your body, when you pay attention to your food and stop to enjoy the fact that you're having a delicious meal, rather than stuffing something in on the go, you'll notice that you feel happy, satisfied and satiated (full without being stuffed), all the time. At the same time you'll see the pounds melt away week by week.

Here are some tips for learning how to truly enjoy your food.

1. Stop to enjoy your meals. Even if it's just for 10 minutes. Don't give me "I'm too busy". If it's important to you, you will find time. Get up earlier, do your shopping online, cut out some internet surfing, or quit making so many commitments, but do whatever it takes to eat a meal as a meal. Not at your workspace. This will aid digestion, ensure you don't mindlessly overeat, and allow your body to go into recovery mode and metabolize food efficiently. Eating on the run or while doing something else will do the opposite, and something this simple can be the difference between losing weight – or not.
2. Address sensory-specific satiety. Humans are creatures of pleasure. Don't just include different flavors in your meals – go for different textures. Mix sweet with sour, bitter with tangy. Eat some food that is chewy, some that's crunchy, and some that just melts in your mouth. Your food should smell, taste, feel and look as good as possible. Every aspect of your meal should be a pleasure. Is your mouth watering? Mine is. This works – addressing different senses helps you to feel full and satisfied sooner.
3. Put love and time into your preparation. I know this isn't possible every day. But when you get the chance, take the time to buy fresh market produce, and prepare exciting new recipes to tempt yourself and others. There's a lot of pleasure to be had in food preparation.
4. Use the best quality ingredients you can afford. Biodynamic, organic and free range foods have a higher vitamin and mineral content than their conventional counterparts, and this will help you to feel fuller, sooner.
5. Eat rich but natural foods. Quality cheeses, meats, nuts, 70% or more dark chocolate – these are all examples of foods that can assist weight loss (see section on food for full explanation), and make you feel as though you've indulged at the same time.

8.0.7 Calorie Counting and Low-Fat Foods: Not what You Thought

I mentioned above that both an under-eater and an over-eater are teaching their bodies to store fat faster and here's why.

When it comes to over-eating, eating more food than you need can actually result in malnutrition. This is because overeaters typically will eat whatever is in front of them, until it is gone. In many cases, the emphasis here is on carb-based snacks that are fairly valueless nutritionally. But even though you are malnourished, you will continue to gain weight. The constant eating tells your body that famine or winter must be coming. From an evolutionary point of view, excessive eating (especially carbs) means that food is readily available, which means it must be summer. Therefore winter – and less food – is on its way. So now must be the time to store fat!

Under eating affects your body in similar manner. If you continually cut calories, eat low-fat or low-cal foods, and try to keep yourself in a state of hunger all the time by pushing back meals or eating very small portions, then you're doomed to fail. Doomed. Sure, you might drop some scale weight in the first week, as your body reduces water and starts eating your muscle to replace the missing energy. What a great way to lower your metabolism and end up with more weight coming back than when you started! Ever heard of the yo-yo effect of dieting? This is it.

Let me explain how it works.

You cut calories, eat low-fat foods or eat only very small portions. Your body thinks you can't find food. Your body doesn't know you're in the 21st century. It thinks – you are starving! Resources are at a low! Who knows when adequate nutrition will return?! But don't worry – your body is smart. It has the solution. It is extremely adept at switching on all your fat-storing hormones immediately in order to face this impending disaster and keep you alive.

First point of action: use muscle for energy. Not fat. Oh no – we want to keep the fat, because we can live longer on fat stores than we can on muscle.

Second point of action: turn whatever you do eat (especially carbohydrate) into fat. This is to ensure your survival.

Third point of action: slow your metabolism as much as possible in order to minimize fat burning and, yep – you got it – keep you alive.

Oh and girls, there's a bonus for you. You will store extra fat twice as fast. Just in case you get pregnant. Can't have the baby becoming malnourished! Man, your body is smart. So how smart are you? Smart enough to stop starving yourself and eat right?

8.0.8 Energy in Versus Energy Out: A Big Fat Dieting Myth

We measure energy in calories (a measurement of heat). Energy in is what we eat, and energy out is the combined total of our activities, as well as the amount of heat it takes to run our body. According to the energy in vs. energy out theory:

- If energy in equals energy out, then there is no change in mass.
- If energy in is less than energy out, you lose weight
- If energy in is greater than energy out, you gain weight.

Sounds pretty simple, doesn't it?

According to this rule, increasing your exercise to burn an additional 3500 kcal per week would result in losing one pound of weight. Unfortunately, it's really not that simple. You see, the body runs according to the laws of biochemistry, not math or physics. And biochemistry tells us that there are many other variables that can and will affect your weight. For example, if you significantly decrease calories, your metabolic rate will drop in order to help keep you alive for longer. This is known as adaptive thermogenesis – your body will always fight for your survival and will outsmart you every time.

I've just given you a taster of why a low-cal diet is doomed to fail. But what comes next is going to shock you.

The concept of energy in vs. energy out as regards weight loss is basically the biggest lie in the weight loss industry. It is perpetuated by doctors, nutritionists, personal trainers and many other health practitioners, so no wonder so many people are convinced it's the way to go.

But where is the proof?

Here's the truth about following a program that requires you to count energy and eat less than what you expend.

- Excessive exercise tells your body you must be on the run – no doubt either running from a war or an enemy of some kind, or searching for food. Either way, this sort of behavior optimizes fat-storage in order to ensure your survival. The typical example given here is 'fight or flight' as in running from a tiger.
- It also stimulates your Sympathetic Nervous System, otherwise known as your fight or flight system. This has numerous negative impacts on your health and waistline, including increased physical and emotional stress, aches and pains, poor recovery, moodiness, poor

sleep, inhibited digestion, and general exhaustion. In reading the other sections of this book you'll understand why all these affect your ability to lose weight.

- This alone is bad enough. But when you couple it with a low-energy diet (as many weight loss enthusiasts do), you're on the road to long-term struggles. Add in all that you learnt above about low-energy eating, and then times it by infinity!
- As far as your body is concerned, not only is there a famine on, or you can't access food for whatever reason, but you are also on the run and your life is threatened! Time to go into SUPER fat-storing mode!

Still not convinced? Here are some of the outcomes of low-energy dieting coupled with high-energy output:

Short-term Effects of Excess Dieting and Exercise

- Fatigue
- Grumpiness
- Anti-social behavior
- Bloating or fluid retention
- Loss of physical strength
- More prone to injury, aches and pains
- Metabolism and other functions slow
- Digestion is inhibited
- Body will turn carbohydrates (even the healthy ones) into fat
- You will lose muscle
- Sleep will be impaired
- Women will notice an increase in period pain/irregularity
- Fertility may be at risk
- Libido will drop or disappear
- Quality of hair, skin and nails will diminish

Long-term Effects of Excess Dieting and Exercise

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Obesity
- Alzheimer's
- Parkinson's
- Obesity
- Depression, other psychological disorders
- May affect family or children

- Always sick
- Chronic Fatigue
- An early death
- A life unfulfilled

No, I'm not getting carried away. This is how serious extreme dieting and excessive exercise can be.

8.0.9 What About Meal Replacements or Fat-Loss Shakes?

One habit that many people embark on throughout their weight loss journey is the testing of various fat loss shakes or supplements. Time and time again people ask me about protein or slimming shakes that are marketed toward weight loss.

A few years back, a client came to me who wanted to lose 50 pounds in 3 months. That's a pretty big goal. One of the ways she had decided to do this was to live almost entirely on slimming shakes.

I started to do some research on her brand of choice, but also on slimming shakes or meal-replacements in general and here's what I found about how slimming shakes actually affect your body fat levels.

You will lose weight initially. For some people, this will include a small percentage of body fat. For most, it is simply water weight and muscle.

This could go on for as long as four weeks – depending on how strict you are. Hey- if you're trying to drop three sizes in 2 weeks, I won't lie to you. This could make you look slimmer.

But the long-term consequences will be devastating. Are you willing to damage your metabolism and gain more weight than ever before in order to meet a short-term goal? Just how far are you going to go before you realize how much work has to be done to become truly healthy and slim?

At some point (usually 2-5 weeks), the weight loss will slow dramatically, and then stop. This is because your body has lowered your metabolism as much as possible, and has burned through as much readily available muscle as possible.

By this stage you will look pasty and unhealthy, your energy and moods will be appalling, you will find it very difficult to exercise, and your general demeanor and sense of wellbeing will be at an all-time low. That's a promise, folks.

To add insult to injury, panic will set in as (if you continue with these sort of shakes) you notice that you seem to be gaining a little weight back. Your weight will creep back up as your body actions a massive fat-storing attack to ensure your survival.

Since you're gaining weight anyway, you'll start eating real food a bit more. You may make an effort to eat only healthy foods in order to lose that weight again.

Too late. Within a matter of weeks (usually around 10 days), your weight will be higher than what it was before you started this plan.

Congratulations – you've just re-set your metabolism so that it is now permanently slower than before you started all this. Now everything you eat will make you gain weight faster, and if you try

to starve yourself or go back on the shakes you'll either wind up dead (depending on how strict you are) or fatter anyway as your body goes into stress and fat storing mode again.

Don't get me wrong – **a good quality (organic, grass-fed) whey protein shake** with no synthetic additives or sugars is a great supplement to post-workout nutrition. But that's it. Replacing meals with magic-promise shakes, especially if it's your morning meal, will only serve to make you less healthy, more fat, and more unhappy.

8.0.10 Is Your Body Programmed to be Fat?

Sorry to have to tell you this, but the truth is that your body wants you fat. You see, historically, it was not 'cool' to be thin. In days gone by, it was those who could store fat effectively who would survive and have their family line live on.

So – as twisted as it might sound given how much we all strive to be as lean as possible – your body is on a mission to keep you fat. This is how it works:

- Your body will turn carbs into fat if you don't eat fat
- Your body will use muscle not fat for energy if desperate
- If you restrict your food intake or eat the wrong foods, you can stay overweight despite eating less than all your skinny friends

In order to overcome this programming it's important that you understand the difference between emotional hunger and physical hunger. Emotional hunger takes you from zero to sixty in practically one second. You're suddenly starving. It also tends to be craving related, or for a specific food and is based in the head. You must have that food! Urgently! Emotional hunger is often combined with an upsetting incidence or emotion. It can be unconscious and is perfectly capable of ignoring the sensation of being full. Emotional hunger results in you eating out of guilt and beating yourself up. Talk about a vicious cycle.

Physical hunger, on the other hand, gives you steadily progressive clues that it's time to eat. It is open to different foods and is based in the stomach. It can wait a little while if it has to. It is based purely on the physical and so you may experience low energy or light-headedness if overly hungry. Physical hunger is deliberate and allows you to stop when full. When you're physically hungry you eat for fuel, and out of necessity.

According to researchers at Brookhaven National Laboratory, obese people's desire to eat triggers the same brain action as an addicts' desire for drugs.

In fact, experts estimate that 75% of overeating is caused by emotions. What you need to do is to identify the triggers that lead to emotional eating for you. These tend to fall into five main categories:

1. Social
2. Situational
3. Emotional/stress
4. Thoughts
5. Physiological

Keeping track of your food triggers in your food diary can be very helpful and more than a little eye opening. And it can give you the basis for overcoming any poor eating habits that you may have allowed to control you.

How to Battle Emotional Eating and Win

Emotional eating is a place that we've all been before. With temptation around every corner, it's hard not to give in and treat ourselves if our emotions are taking a beating. Sometimes it seems that all your worries can disappear just by burying yourself in a big tub of ice cream or a super-size bag of M&M's. The worst part is that when you do this you become a bit of a zombie. You forget about your weight loss goals completely, at least for a period of time.

So what can you do?

Every piece of advice in this book is geared toward teaching you to be aware of your body's true food needs. The more you integrate what you learn here, in the correct order as identified by your priority chart, the more you will notice you are using food as fuel, not as a crutch.

In the meantime, find another outlet for your emotions. Unload on a friend, take a power walk, find something to laugh at. Use your brain! When was the last time you wrote, or drew, or did anything creative, or even filled out a crossword? These activities can induce a sense of flow that distracts you from your pain and allows healing to take place.

Write yourself regular reminders in your journal as to why you are no longer a hostage to your emotions. My favorite way of doing this is to simply write "I have a healthy attitude toward food and all my eating behaviors are positive". Write it and believe it. I'd also suggest you stop right now to make a list of things (at least 10) that you can use as outlets for your emotions and to help you feel in control. Refer back to your list whenever the pantry or corner store is calling.

Of course breaking the binds of emotional or comfort eating is often just the beginning. Part of undoing negative eating patterns is formulating new, positive patterns.

Everyday Habits to Optimize Fat Release

- If it wasn't there 1000 years ago, don't eat it. Choose real foods that are not processed or meddled with.
- Follow the advice in the food section to ensure you choose the right nutrients for your weight loss needs.
- Give your body reassurance: eating real food at regular times each day will tell your body that it's ok – food is available. This will cause your body to switch on your Parasympathetic Nervous System. Its job is to help you rest and rebuild, and release stored fat.
- Minimize stress by following the advice in the stress section.

- Don't worry about calories. Worry only about eating the correct balance of foods until you are truly satisfied. Learn to listen to your body's needs and follow them. Use your Food Diary for assistance in this area.

8.0.11 How To Rid Yourself of Cravings Once and For All

When you experience regular cravings it's a sure sign that you are not feeding your body enough nutrients. I'm not talking about emotional cravings, I'm talking about a physical urge for a certain food, usually sweet or savory.

When I say you're lacking nutrition, I don't mean you're not eating enough food. I've seen plenty of people who are severely overweight and still malnourished. I mean that the foods you are eating are not providing you with adequate nutrition. This could be due to poor quality, poor choices, or poor absorption. Or all three. The answer is to deal with each of these issues through by following the advice in the food and digestion sections.

Lack of nutrition is probably the main cause of cravings but here are some others:

- Your hormonal system is imbalanced. This could be through a lack of nutrients, but it could also be related to stress, moods, exercise or a lack of sleep.
- Your sleep-wake cycles are out of whack and you are relying on stimulants to get you through the day. This could be stress/lifestyle related, or it could just be that you're not getting to bed on time, or at consistent times.
- Excessive intake coffee, tea, sports drinks, soda, or sugar in the earlier part of the day is robbing your body of nutrients and sending out a distress signal for fast energy – otherwise known as sugar.

To beat the cravings before they beat you, be sure to eat balanced meals earlier on in the day. A balanced meal includes healthy and natural fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. If you eat a breakfast or lunch that is predominantly carbohydrate, your body will not have enough nutrition to run your system. This results in a cry for help. The fastest way to get energy to your brain is sugar. The result is sweet cravings and continual weight gain.

When it comes to your hormones, a full discussion is outside the realms of this book. But there are a few simple ways to improve hormonal and metabolic function, and you can start today.

- Eat balanced meals (see above)
- Reduce stress by taking time-out to do nothing or pursue a favorite pastime; even for 10 minutes
- Make a conscious effort to find a positive take on everything. This is far more powerful than you might think. Your thoughts really do determine not only your actions, but also your physiology (the way your body functions on the inside)

- Avoid doing only 'intense' exercise. Try some yoga or meditation as an active way of relaxing and detoxifying stress. Sound too simple to have an effect? Just try it. I've seen many clients control their cravings, appetite and weight through changes just as simple as these.
- Ensure rhythmic sleep-wake cycles by getting to bed and waking up around the same time each day. Avoid bright lights, alcohol, sugar or coffee before bedtime. This will help you sleep deeper, relax more, and allow you to wake refreshed and with all systems ready to 'go'. Including your metabolism. Couple this with a balanced breaky and those sweet cravings will start to fade.
- Excess coffee, tea, sports drinks, or anything with added caffeine or sugar will not only activate fat-storing stress hormones, but your body will use nutrients from the good food you've eaten to get rid of these toxic substances. This can result in dehydration, a sluggish metabolism, and lowered energy due to poor nutrient absorption.

8.0.12 Variety Counts

Did you know that the average American eats only eleven different foods per year? Sounds incredible, doesn't it?! Now I'm sure you're not quite that restrictive in your food choices, but I'd bet you're not far off. It's all too easy to fall into the habit of constantly eating that favorite meal or snack, isn't it? Stop and think about it for a moment. Do you eat the same breaky, or lunch, or snack day in and day out? It's easy, isn't it? Makes shopping and preparation more convenient, that's for sure. Plus, you can buy in bulk, and really – why change a good thing?

But how good is it? Here's why sticking to your favorite foods every day could be making you fat – regardless of how healthy they are.

- You will definitely be lacking nutrients. It is not possible to get an adequate balance of proteins, fats and carbs by eating the same foods over and over again.
- Boredom with the same meals often leads people to eat more at mealtime, or snack on more junk food between meals.
- It is highly likely you will develop food intolerance which you may remain unaware of and will be slowing digestion and metabolism. Eating any food day in and day out is a pre-cursor to food intolerance, and once you have one or two intolerances, it's all too easy to gain more. I've come across clients who are intolerant to as many as 90 different foods. This can make eating, optimal digestion, and lasting weight loss pretty darn hard and so I'd suggest you do all you can to avoid being one of them.

Simple Ways to Mix It Up

I don't expect you to get too fancy and carried away. I still advise my clients to cook a large amount of food all at once and use the leftovers for lunch the next day – or even the next 2 days! That's just common sense. But what I do know is that unless your foods are sufficiently varied, you will not burn fat effectively. Keep in mind that by trying new foods and flavors, you will further satisfy all your senses and this will result in you feeling satiated sooner. The outcome will be that you'll feel great and you'll lose more weight.

5 Rules for Variety:

1. Shop seasonally. Buy food at the market when it's in season, and from a local source. Ask if you're not sure. This will make it impossible for you to eat the same food year-round, and you will also have fresher produce.
2. Pull out yummy-looking recipes from the newspapers and try a new one at least once a week.

3. Give old favorites a new twist: change some of the key vegetables, or even the key spices. Who knows? You may find a winner.
4. Enlist a friend who you know eats well to do a lunch swap with you once a week when you're at work or study. Brings you back to school days, doesn't it? And it sure makes things a little more exciting.
5. Try new things when you eat out. I was once known to order nothing but steak at restaurants for about 2 years. As much as I love steak, I now force myself to go for the duck, or the fish, or anything as long as it's different. I've had some great meals this way.

8.0.13 Easy Cooking and Food Preparation Habits

Food preparation is as simple as you make it. You don't have to be a gourmet chef or use 6 different pots and pans to create a healthy and tasty meal.

There are many recipe books these days focusing on simplicity in cooking, and here are some of my favorite tips.

- Get a slow cooker. This is so easy. Just throw in chunks of protein with chunks of veg and some water plus a few spices. Turn it on low and wait till that beautiful aroma hits you at the end of the day. Get a big one so you can prepare several meals in advance.
- If you cook a roast, do an extra one. You're going to the trouble anyway (although a roast is really one of the simplest meals), why not cook extra for lunches?
- Same goes with stir-fries or any dinner type dish. Always always always cook extra! Freeze it if you know you won't use it all over the next 2 days.
- Soft boil eggs for 3 days in advance and use for snacks or as part of a meal. Couple with some leftover lightly steamed veg and you have a fast meal or snack.
- Use sea salt as a quick flavor enhancer to any plain'n'simple meal. Sea salt is great for reducing excess fluid, can lower your bad blood cholesterol and blood pressure, and it tastes good as well. It should be grey or pink in color – buy it at your health food store and ensure it's certified organic.

8.0.14 Action List: Patterns of Behavior

Based on the information you've just learnt, ask and answer the following questions in your journal:

1. Possible reasons why my metabolism is running slow include ...
2. I need to get off the low-fat, low-cal, or low-food bandwagon because ...
3. The top 5 things I've learnt about cravings and emotional eating are ...
4. A positive new pattern I'm going to test out is ...
5. To take control of my cravings I'm going to ...
6. Some patterns I still need help overcoming are ...

Chapter 9: Lifestyle and Other Factors

Sometimes it's the little things that can make a tremendous difference. Maybe you've sorted out your eating, you're exercising regularly, you're motivated and happy and on track. Maybe for the first time in years your body really seems to be running at it's best, or at least you know it's on its way, and yet still those last stubborn few pounds just won't shift.

Or perhaps you're still at the beginning of your weight loss journey but you're determined to maximize your success by getting everything right from the start.

Well that's where this section comes in.

I've structured this book so that you can't end up here first. Not because this stuff isn't important, merely because it's kind of like the grout in the wall. You know – that stuff that joins bricks together?

Food, stress, digestion, motivation, all that stuff is like the bricks (in no particular order). But if you don't pay attention to the little details, you won't reach your full weight-loss potential, and that's a promise. Over the coming pages are some of the most common hindrances to weight loss as well as some little-known facts about maximizing your success.

9.0.1 Fat Burning Supplements and Diet Pills

Fat burning supplements or diet pills – even if combined with a balanced diet and exercise program, will only cause you problems in the long run. In the short-term, of course, they will:

- Allow your body to lose water and muscle weight initially. This is because they are designed to create a stress reaction by stimulating your Sympathetic Nervous System and releasing nasty fat-storing hormones.
- Enhance exercise ability in the short-term. Again, because they have put you into ‘stress’ mode, you will be charged up and raring to go when you start taking these pills

When it comes to these sort of stimulants, along with most meal replacements and slimming shakes, there is a given point when your body can no longer handle the repeated stimulation of the stress system (your Sympathetic Nervous System). This is when your body decides that times must really be tough and goes into super fat-storing mode.

Repeated exposure to fat burning supplements and pills can permanently mess up and slow down your metabolism, meaning you gain weight faster on less food.

9.0.2 Excessive Television

Did you know that there are numerous studies showing that excessive television watching reduces your metabolism by as much as 5 percent? It's not just the sitting that's the problem, it's the harmful effects of constant low-level radiation coupled with the fact that television encourages us to zone out, to become zombies for an hour or two.

As if that weren't bad enough, it's time spent in complete inactivity when you could be reading, learning, preparing good food, socializing or exercising.

Television also encourages poor posture, which, over time, will affect your respiration and digestion, and this in turn affects your ability to burn fat. To add insult to injury, it's generally accompanied by unhealthy or unconscious eating (where you keep eating without being aware of how much has already gone in).

Limit your television intake to 60 minutes per day and your body will thank you. Who knows? You may even find it's kind of fun getting out there and living life every so often!

9.0.3 Genetically Modified (GM) Foods

A study commissioned by Greenpeace and published in the journal Archives of Environmental Contamination and Technology recently demonstrated that rats that were fed for 90 days on Monsanto's MON863 maize (which is GM) showed "signs of toxicity" in the liver and kidneys.

Greenpeace, along with many organizations and health practitioners say that GM technology is not only unproven but also potentially dangerous. Research has further shown that GM crops can contaminate other nearby crops - I read of a farmer whose organic crops were 'attacked' by nearby GM crops (the organisms travel through the air), only to end up being sued by the GM seed manufacturer for stealing their technology. Sure – I bet that's why he went to the trouble of gaining an organic farming certification; a tough, three-year process!

So how is this relevant to you? Nearly all processed foods these days contain some kind of GM food. A recent statistic from Australia showed that there are currently 9600 hectares of GM food crops, when in 2001 it was ZERO. Pretty scary. Keep it simple by avoiding processed foods – and you'll find you'll automatically side step the litany of health and weight complaints that accompany the regular consumption of these foods.

9.0.4 The Connection between Period Pains and Weight

It's normal to experience a little cramping or tender boobs right around the start of your period. Your hormones are changing and a physical reflection of that is to be expected. What is beyond normal is if you experience severe cramping or bloating, cramping that lasts longer than 2 days, diarrhea for more than two days, breasts that ache with pain, or extreme moodiness.

This is not just about popping a pill to get rid of the pain. We have to ask why it is there in the first place.

Extreme adverse symptoms during your period are often an indication of malnutrition and an imbalanced hormonal system. Much of this is related to the foods you do or don't eat, but other factors such as stress can affect the severity of period pain as well.

Malnutrition, incorrect food choices, and imbalanced food choices are three of the leading causes of increased fat storage and weight gain. What's more, females are more adept at storing fat than men (wish we didn't have to win this one, hey girls?!), so it becomes even more important to stimulate your body toward fat burning not building.

I mean, really, we do have it a bit tough. Mood swings I can handle (even if everyone around me can't), but it's just so frustrating to feel like all the hard work and healthy living was paying off; to even see some definition on your abs, and then BAM! It's like flipping a switch for some women! Overnight you seem to gain not just one but several spare tyres.

Over the years I've come to understand more about how hormones affect us at that time, and have tried and tested just about anything, and here's what I've found. Here's what I've found really works.

1. Flatten your tummy and clear your skin by avoiding processed carbohydrate. You'll know by now that I don't encourage you to eat processed carbs as part of your regular diet. As a reminder - by processed carbs, I mean white breads, pasta, rice and even white potatoes. Cakes, biscuits, chocolates, crisps and soft drinks also fall into this category. Around that time of month (a week before, and during), it's particularly important to replace these foods with fresh vegetables, the occasional fresh fruit and plenty of quality protein and fat. This is because processed carbs contribute to out-of-whack hormones, and may cause an additional output of estrogen – one of whose jobs is to make your body think it's pregnant! Makes sense, doesn't it?
2. Flush out the fluid with sea salt. Many people believe salt consumption will make them retain fluid. Whilst this is true, the really unfair thing is that a lack of salt can also cause you to puff up and if you're cautious about salt consumption, this could be you! I'm not talking about bleached white table salt – go for the grey chunky sea salt crystals. You'll find them in any health food or organic store. Add a few pinches to your water and meals and watch your body deflate. On exercise days, go for a little extra to replace what's lost when you sweat.

3. De-bloat your belly with gentle exercise. Please, please, please – don't be one of those girls who shies off exercise for a week when you've got your period! Honestly – you're not that fragile. While it's true that high-impact exercise or record setting lifts in the gym are not a great idea at this time, gentle weight training, cardio, yoga or Pilates are all a great idea. Continuing to exercise will lift your mood, get your digestive system moving (to flatten those abs), and can also mean at least one hour in the day when you won't be sitting around feeling sorry for yourself and giving in to sweet temptation.

Dealing with Cravings During Your Period

Have you ever noticed you crave sweets more during your period, and in the week leading up to it? I don't think this is just because Cleo magazine says that we are allowed to eat more chocolate during our periods. In fact, if any guy says you're imagining the cravings, you have my permission to punch him!

The truth is that there is a reason you have increased cravings around this time. For most women it's sugar they desire, but some may find themselves desperate for rich or salty foods.

Either way, cravings of any kind are a sign of an imbalanced body. Going through your period each month is an increased physical stress. It's uncomfortable, it restricts certain activities, it wreaks havoc with your hormones and moods, it can cause pain, and it's basically just a real nuisance. All this combines to tell your body that you are going through an increased time of stress.

Unless you combat this stress by making a few changes, you will continue to crave, remain in discomfort or pain, and most probably end up gaining a little weight during this time.

During times of stress or hormonal change, you'll often notice sweet cravings. In many cases, this is because your body is not getting the building blocks it needs to run your system, balance your hormones, and keep your digestive system going. In the lead-up to your next period, try increasing your intake of quality fats and proteins. Include avocado, extra virgin olive oil, organic meats such as lamb, beef and chicken thighs, and even supplement with mercury-free Omega 3 capsules. The idea is not to eat extra food (in quantity), it's more about changing the percentages of your carbs to protein/fat to be more in favor of protein/fats. I guarantee this works – I haven't had a single client for whom it hasn't!

9.0.5 The Pitfalls of Convenience Cooking

Is convenience cooking ruining your health? A study published in the November 2003 issue of The Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture found that broccoli zapped in the microwave with a little water lost up to 97% of the beneficial antioxidant chemicals it contains and the benefits of other nutrients were also significantly reduced. By comparison, steamed broccoli lost 11 percent of its antioxidants – or less. Not to mention the fact that microwaved food is just never quite as fresh or yummy looking as fresh or even pot re-heated food is.

As if that weren't enough, the heat of microwaving can cause toxins and carcinogens to leach from plastic containers into your food, microwaving breast milk has been shown to break down the disease-fighting ability of the milk, and in 1991 a lawsuit was brought about after a woman died due to transfusion blood being warmed in a microwave (which was not usual practice).

It may be convenient to microwave your foods either for cooking or re-heating purposes, but I'd say it's more convenient to know that your health is not at risk and that you're getting true satisfaction from a complete nutritional profile in your foods. Trust me – you can learn to eat your lunch leftovers cold. It's worth it.

9.0.6 Drugs, Cigarettes and Steroids

I do recognize that these are three very different items and by no means am I implying that someone who uses one will use all three. I've simply decided to talk about them together as I am covering this area only briefly.

You see, anything that is unnatural or contains synthetic ingredients is toxic to your body. This causes a stress and fat-storing reaction and your body will stop all other processes in order to focus on getting the substance out of your system.

Furthermore, most party drugs, and all cigarettes, contain sugar. 'Nuff said, wouldn't you say?

As for steroids or growth hormone, well, let's be honest. They will only take you so far. And exactly how far are you willing to go to look more muscular? Bad skin, poor libido, messed up digestion, imbalanced hormones ... the list goes on. And you WILL pay the price eventually. Your body will fight back with fat in the end. Just look at most retired bodybuilders. (Yes, I know there are exceptions, but that's why they're called exceptions).

9.0.7 “I Can’t Just Eat One” Syndrome

I bet I’m not the only one who’s polished off an entire packet of biscuits in one sitting. You know what I’m talking about, don’t you? It goes something like “I just can’t stop”, or “I’ll just have one ... oh, okay one more”, and next thing you know the entire packet is gone. It’s really not as simple as mind over matter and here’s why.

I mean, c’mon. Could you really say no to that yummy cookie tower? Maybe once or twice, but surely not every time? The truth is that food manufacturers deliberately set out to trick and manipulate you, and you really have very little control over this unless you are eating a completely organic diet. Food technology is so advanced that scientists have the ability to confuse, manipulate and

control the part of your brain that monitors your blood nutrient levels and thus controls satisfaction. This part of your brain is called your appestat centre.

According to Paul Chek, H.H.P,

“Food scientists have found that by adding or subtracting some of these nutrients, they can manipulate your sense of hunger and satiety. While the research is still incomplete, it’s believed that adding excess fat, sugar and salt to a food tends to make people over eat. This is why both sugar and salt show up in some of the strangest places. For example, would you have expected to find sugar in sandwich meats? Have a look at the ingredients on the package in your refrigerator and look for words ending with “ose”. Anything ending with this suffix is a sugar. While you’re at it, look at your catsup bottle, your canned soups, medicines and even cigarettes! How sweet of them to play such tricks on your appetite centers. If you are overweight, you are more than likely one of millions of victims of chemical manipulation!”

Scary stuff. And this is just one example.

To take another, consider foods that have been ‘enriched’. These are foods that are nutritionally void. This is generally because the processing they go through kills off all nutrition, or it may be because the food was of such low quality that there was very little nutrition to begin with. The enriching process is about adding synthetic vitamins to “restore” nutrition. Suffice to say, synthetic vitamins which are cheap, highly toxic, and added before the foods are blasted at high temperatures in the oven, are somewhat useless. I know I prefer my vitamins in the real food form or from trusted supplement sources.

9.0.8 How Synthetic Chemicals and Toxins Make You Fat

The average person is exposed to around 15,000 chemicals and toxins each year. In terms of what you consume, estimates are around 20kg of pure chemicals each year. I'm talking about the synthetic, nasty kind. Obviously you can't control much of what you're exposed to in the environment. But considering that chemicals and other toxins are stored in your fat cells (causing them to expand), and can also make your skin bad, your energy low, and play with your hormones and moods, it's worth taking steps to minimize your chemical intake, wouldn't you say?

Here are some simple steps to do just that.

- Use certified organic (not just natural) skin and hair products
- Use certified organic, enviro-friendly cleaning products
- Eat organic or biodynamic foods
- Don't drink decaf coffee (chemicals are used to decaffeinate it) – or ask for Swiss water filtered decaf
- Avoid processed or packaged foods
- Don't allow food or beverages to be contained in warm plastic

You can also help detoxify chemicals and other toxins by breathing fully, sweating regularly, and eating quality fresh foods.

Approximately 90% of the money that Americans and Australians spend on food is used to buy processed foods – why don't you start making a change to this statistic today.

9.0.9 The Effects Of a Busy or Frantic Lifestyle on Weight

Are you always on the go, always busy, never have time to stop and look around or reflect? If this is you then I'd advise you to consider a few things. Firstly, isn't it likely that this lifestyle means you're not truly enjoying or even participating in your life? Secondly, if you're so caught up in doing then how can you be sure you're on the path you want to be on? And finally, did you realize that this go-go-go lifestyle means you're continually releasing stress hormones that cause your body to store fat?!

The last thing I want to do here is turn the idea of relaxation or a slower lifestyle into another form of stress. Most likely you won't be able to change the way you live overnight. But if you don't start making small changes right away, when will you ever make any progress? Relaxation is not just an airy-fairy thing for people who have nothing better to do or no serious responsibilities. It's a crucial part of your weight loss success and I'd suggest you start seeing it for that, if for no other benefit.

Relaxation can be whatever you choose it to be, but typically will involve you switching your mind off. Yes, this can include television, but that's what I'd call energy-stealing relaxation. I mean, c'mon. Can you honestly say you feel uplifted or re-energized after watching TV? Relaxation that involves some form of nature is often the most effective, but you can also consider activities like a massage or facial, catching up with a friend, or just curling up with a book. Look at the things you fill your day with. Are they all truly important? If there is nowhere that you can cut back then you're going to need to re-evaluate your priorities and values. Do the kids really need so many after-school activities, for example? Couldn't you just keep them home now and then and cut out a little running around for yourself? How about emails? Must they be checked every hour? Tim Ferriss, in his book "The Four-Hour Work Week", suggests that a lot of time and energy can be saved by only checking emails twice each day, and I'd suggest you can apply this principle to many areas of your life.

Can you think of examples that are relevant to your life? Write down 5 relaxation activities that you'd enjoy doing, as well as 5 ways you can cut back on the busyness of your life. And then do them!

9.0.10 Health and Weight-Loss Effects of Sunshine and Nature

Believe it or not, getting out in the sun is not just about getting a tan. In fact, soaking up the rays is one of the cheapest ways to improve your health and wellbeing, release stress, and enhance your mood. Oh, and yes, you might just get a nice color at the same time!

Granted, not everyone has access to sunshine all year round – this is why it's so important to make the most of the good weather when you can. I don't think anyone ever looked back from their deathbed and wished they had spent more time in the great indoors.

It's not just about sunshine either – studies have shown that time spent in nature, surrounded by plant-life (even an inner-city park will do!), actually recharges your positive energy. We all have an electromagnetic field surrounding us – this is basically our inner energy. Some people call it chi. When we spend time in the sun, or in nature, we gain more vital energy. In contrast, being surrounded by computers and harsh office lights zaps us of our natural energy. Try walking around your garden or a local park barefoot for 10 minutes – I promise you will feel a lift in your mood and wellbeing, and your body will thank you for it as your stress hormones begin to melt away, allowing your metabolism to regulate and your spirits to lift.

9.0.11 Relaxation and Meditation

I used to be quite the meditation cynic. Not for me the idea of sitting around with my palms lifted, saying 'ohm'. I found it hard enough to sit still for 10 minutes while thinking, let alone trying to sit still and clear my mind at the same time.

But once I learnt how effective relaxation was at helping you lower your stress hormones, thus preventing your body from storing fat, and helping you to get a lean tummy at the same time as improving your energy, I was kind of hooked.

The good news is that meditation doesn't have to mean sitting still and 'clearing your mind'. There's a reason I've lumped meditation and relaxation in the same box here. I believe that meditation can be different for everyone – the objective is simply to take time out of your head from thinking about whatever it is that you think about all day. Ideally you should be relaxing your physical body as well as your emotional and mental self. Afterwards, you should feel uplifted and re-energized.

Here are some of my favorite ways to meditate, bearing in mind that by meditation can mean anything that relaxes and uplifts you:

- Bikram Yoga (for those who still like an intense workout)
- Regular Yoga or Tai Chi
- Wandering aimlessly through the park
- Time in prayer
- Lying on the couch listening to classical music
- Lying in bed on a rainy morning
- Playing time-zone games like basketball
- Lying in the park on a sunny day
- Watching a funny movie

You should already have five of your own relaxation activities listed. Now I'd like you to come up with five more. You can steal some of mine of course.

Really think about it - what do you like to do that allows you to zone out (without the aid of alcohol!), and makes you feel refreshed afterwards?

9.0.12 The Importance of Living with Balance

We hear about ‘balance’ all the time – work-life balance, hormone balance, nutritional balance ... apparently if you’re not ‘balanced’, then you must be missing out.

The truth is, even if you love your job, or thrive on stress, you’ll be able to perform at your best when you take time out on occasion. True balance is achieved when you acknowledge that you’ll be at your best when you regularly address all aspects of your being. This comes back to knowing what’s important to you – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually – and making sure you do something about it. I sort of touched on this earlier when we were talking about living a frantic lifestyle.

It’s about knowing that no matter how ‘caught up’ in work, family, or anything else you might be, that you’ll be able to do the job more effectively if you force yourself to rejuvenate by taking time out for less pressing areas of your life. Here’s some examples of how this might work.

- A workaholic taking a long weekend without their laptop
- A busy parent taking a half-day by themselves
- A loving partner spending an evening without their other half and remembering the importance of occasional alone time
- Taking time to exercise if you sit down most of the day
- Taking time to sit down if you run around most of the day
- Reading a book on an unusual topic
- An ‘all-logic’ person exploring their creative side

Can you relate to any of these? Whether or not you can, try to come up with three more for yourself – ways that you can turn your normal routine around and invite balance into your life.

9.0.13 Getting More Out of Your Workouts

Are you a high-speed gym junkie or a mind-body enthusiast? It's a fact that most exercise enthusiasts are drawn either to intense training, or to relaxation-orientated exercise.

In part this comes back to personality type – some people love to go-go-go in the gym (or think that's what they need to do), others love to slow down when they exercise.

While both styles have their benefits, you'll achieve the best results both physically and mentally by NOT focusing exclusively on one or the other. To gain the best of both worlds, include both "anabolic" (replenishing) exercise (yoga, Pilates, stretching: great to do toward the end of the day; releases winding down hormones) and "catabolic" (breaking down) exercise (running, weights, intense outdoor training: best toward the beginning of the day; releases get-up-and-go' hormones).

You'll find that the two styles complement each other and allow you to be at your best in both areas. Structuring all your exercise toward one or the other style can result in poor hormonal balance and make it harder for you to lose weight or tone your body.

9.0.14 Action List: Lifestyle and Other Factors

You can start to turn your weight and your health around any time you choose. Why not choose to do so right away? Answer the following questions in a notebook or journal and then choose just one item to focus on today.

Tomorrow, pick another one. And so on. Baby steps turn into huge monster outcomes – or at least they can do!

1. What are three things I can change today about the way I live my life?
2. What are three more things touched on this section, which are important to me, but for which I need to prepare for or work towards?
3. Are there any additional items do I acknowledge need to be dealt with but just cannot face right now?

Chapter 10: In Closing

Congratulations! You've made it to the end of your journey! Well, the end of the learning part at least. And I'm sure you've already started living much of what we've gone through. I'm going to assume that you've read this book through in full and paid attention to your individualized priority process.

Hopefully you've put at least the basics of each step into place in your life.

If you haven't done that, you shouldn't really be here, so feel free to read ahead, but be sure to go back over the book again as you continue to make changes to your life. In fact, I'd expect you to need to go back through the book again either way. Use it as your weekly or even daily guide until you really feel you've got a handle on things.

Now that you've got through the first reading through, the fun really begins. Over the coming months, weeks, and yes – even days, you are going to start to notice incredible change in your body. You'll experience some highs and some lows emotionally, but also physically and psychologically. Physical and emotional detoxification is part of any health program, and that's what I mean by lows. Don't be alarmed by these times – they just make the highs all the better!

Like anything, there's going to be days when you just can't be bothered, or when you seem to be genuinely too busy to follow your plan, and there will be days and weeks when you're on fire, and doing every little thing that your priority process tells you to.

I'll tell you right now that there will be some things you struggle with more than others. Maybe you'll even decide to put them aside for later. Tell yourself that you'll get to it. Well let me warn you – this is a dangerous idea.

Don't do it.

You see, the things you struggle with most are generally your biggest demons. Face them with the courage and determination that you know you have somewhere inside of you. For many of my clients, the areas they've found hardest to deal with often end up becoming the accomplishments they are most proud of, and in all cases the areas that are hardest to deal with are the most important.

When it comes to staying motivated and accountable, one of the most useful tools you have at your disposal is your journal. I'd suggest keeping it within close reach on most days, and using it to record your ups and downs, your thoughts and questions along with the answers to your action lists and perhaps any points of special interest that you care to copy down along the way. It's helpful to take a few minutes each week to assess your progress, and to do so as objectively as possible. You can try the following trigger questions as a starting point, or simply write whatever's on your mind.

Trigger questions

Respond to each with whatever comes to mind, there's no 'method' here.

- This week my body looks –
- My body feels –
- I am –
- I do –
- I do not –
- I've found planning my food –
- What I've learned from my food diary –
- My level of rest and relaxation –
- What I stuck to brilliantly –
- What went waaay by the wayside -
- I could have done better at –
- Next week I am motivated to stay on track and change my life because –
- This week I am proud of myself and my achievements because –
- Add your own thought starters either as an advance template, or on a week by week basis

The key here is not to ignore the things that you feel aren't going to plan, but to use your thoughts and words as a means of building yourself up, of recognizing the 'wins' however small they may be, and of reminding yourself why you're doing this.

In theory you're on your own from here on. I've shared with you all that I can within the possibility of a book, so it's up to you to do the hard yards.

But the reality is that you're not on your own. You're armed.

Before you started reading this book you had a goal. Maybe even plenty of motivation, and a plan of sorts.

But now you have a definite plan. And that's a pretty powerful thing. You have an individualized weight-loss strategy that will ensure you cannot fail. And let me tell you, this plan will work. All you need to do is follow it. And if you fall off track, or get lost for a while – hey, no big deal. It's happened to everyone at some stage or another.

The difference between a winner and a loser is knowing that failure is just another opportunity to succeed. And that counts even if it takes you a while to realize it. But when you do, just go back to where you started, re-assess where you're at, and get back on that journey.

You can do this. You can get back on track. And you will achieve your weight loss goals.

So go get it. Your new body is out there waiting for you.

And remember,

Life is Now. Press Play.

With health,

Kat x

FOOD DIARY

In order to determine how much food you need and how much you actually consume, an activity and food journal should be maintained. Your food diary is a notebook (or one half of your journal) where you record the foods you eat, when you eat them, how you felt when you consumed the foods. You will also keep track of your exercise, sleep quality, water intake, and any comments you may have about that day.

The food diary on the page after next is an example of the ideal tracking method. You can, of course, write it daily into your journal, or you can print out copies. Just be sure to track all those items. You may even consider taking it to an office store and getting it bound! Whatever you do, you need to use the food diary a minimum of 6 days each week for the first 6 weeks, and 4 days each week up until the 3-month mark. Even after that I'd suggest at least 3 days a week just to keep you on track. Personally I filled out food diaries most days for about 6 years. Pretty anal, I know, but I found it very useful in learning exactly what works for my body, and in staying accountable to myself, and the lessons I learnt in doing so have kept me on track in the years that followed.

Here are your food diary guidelines. As you'll see, it goes beyond just food intake.

1. **Record your weight and measurements weekly.** To determine accurate progress, record your weight weekly using the same scales and if possible weigh yourself unclothed. Always do it at the same day, and around the same time. Record girth measurements of your waist (at belly button), butt (at largest part), and chest (at nipple line). Remember that measurements are often more telling than weight, which can stay the same for a long while despite changes in your body composition and shape.
2. **Record your physical activity** – what you did, how long you did it for, and what intensity (out of 10) you averaged.
3. **Record your emotions.** What were you feeling when you ate? Were you happy, sad, angry, or actually hungry? You may find it initially difficult to complete the response columns. This is quite normal, but over time you'll start to become more 'tuned in' to the way your body is reacting to your meals. Remember that everything you eat affects you both inside and out, it's just a matter of listening in to the way your body reacts.
4. **Record your physical response to your meals.** Are you satisfied? Full but still hungry? Feel like something was missing? Do you have any cravings? Write it down. This should be done 1-2 hours after a meal. Not sooner and definitely not later. Leave it till the end of the day and it becomes useless information.
5. **Record EVERYTHING you eat and the amount.** In other words, if you bite it – write it. If you have 3 M&M's record it in your journal. If you have 2 bites of ice cream – record it.

6. **Record all food information immediately after eating.** You wouldn't want to leave things out by forgetting, would you?! Be as detailed as possible. If you eat bread, specify what type. Include all beverages and extras such as sauces, salts etc.
7. **Make note of how much sleep you had.** Record the duration and the quality of sleep. Also write down what time you went to bed and woke up, and how you felt in the morning.
8. **Water intake.** Record how many glasses you drank and work toward increasing day by day until you consistently meet your water requirements.
9. **Comments.** Feel free to make any notes you like with reference to how the day went, stress or worries, and just how you're feeling in general. This can be a very helpful way of learning about your thought patterns and the way you treat yourself in your head. It gives you information that you can use to create change.

Finally, congratulate yourself on your efforts for a good day if you maintained an accurate journal. If you did not, strive to make a better effort tomorrow.

Your Food Diary

Date:

Overall how was the day? ☐ EXCELLENT ☐ GOOD ☐ FAIR ☐ POOR

Sleep:

Exercise:

TIME	QTY	FOODS	APPETITE FULLNESS CRAVINGS	ENERGY LEVELS PHYSICAL	MIND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

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WATER (glasses) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

ALCOHOL (list)

COMMENTS

SUPPORT

As you will imagine I receive loads of emails and so I can't answer them all as soon as they come into my inbox. What I can do, however, is offer you ongoing support through my blog www.thekatrinaruthshow.com and through my Facebook page Katrina Ruth @lifeisnow.pressplay.

When this book was first written, my business at the time mostly centred around fitness and health and I was a Life Coach, Personal Trainer and Writer who worked with a limited group of one-on-one clients, specializing more and more in BioSignature modulation and lifestyle makeovers.

Now, almost a decade later, I am a self-made multi-millionaire and life/business success mindset coach for the 1% of the 1%. I coach mostly women from all around the world on making their dreams a reality and settling deeper into a business and life that is flow based and completely aligned.

If you haven't already subscribed to my blog, do that now and get a free copy of my book "Sprint Your Way Rich: The Adrenalin Lovin' Gals Guide to Self Created Wealth Online" by visiting here! <https://thekatrinaruthshow.com/freegift>

I write about success mindset, purpose, living your passion, money mindset, health and fitness and more and send out posts at least once each week, often more, and I know you will find them helpful for ongoing education and even for a little light entertainment! Be sure to get involved in the comments section of each post - I try to answer them all!

It's been great having you as a reader and I'm so excited about what lies ahead for you. I look forward to your feedback, your questions, and your testimonial (I do get through those emails eventually!).

Here's to you living the life and health you always dreamed of and, having fun doing it!

Kat x

SO WHAT NOW?

As a thank-you for reading my book I'd like to invite you to join me in a FREE 8 Day Video Training Series I've created on The Truth About Successful Manifestation!

You can sign up right now and you'll have Day 1 in your inbox immediately!

www.thekatrinaruthshow.com/manifestationfreecourse

The Truth About Successful Manifestation

A Free 8-Day Online Course with Katrina Ruth to get you UNDERSTANDING ... ACTING ON ... CLEARING THE STUFF in the way of ... and DOING THE FREAKIN' work to manifest SUCCESSFULLY.

You.

You're a rule-breaker, and you always have been.

That black sheep thang you've got going on? It's not that you even really TRIED to be a rebel, actually ... although you're not complaining about the fact that it does make you feel kinda cool 😊

But no, you didn't set out to TEAR DOWN THE RULES, deconstruct the norms, REFUSE to say yes just because it's the 'done thing' or 'how it is'.

It just kind of ... happened.

Somewhere between growing up and doing the right thing and trying to fit in and TRYING desperately to be cool, accepted, validated, approved of, MADE worthy, the tide turned.

You started to ... notice things.

THINK about things.

And most of all, or so it's often seemed?

You started to reject things.

Such as the idea that there's a right or a wrong way to do life.

Such as the idea that being a good grown-up ... entrepreneur ... creative ... DRIVEN person ... SUCCESSFUL person ... requires you to be, well –

{You're okay with me just being straight up with you from the get go, right?? Cool ...}

– Stepfordfuckingpreneur

Or person.

Either way.

Because let's face it baby –

You were NEVER gonna be able to do normal, were you? I mean SURE, you may have well TRIED, and indeed you did! I get it! That need to be LIKED runs deep. But in the end?

You were always going to give in to being you.

So,

If you're ready to say yes to YOU -

To being fully and UNAPOLOGETICALLY you -

And going ALL IN, at BEING you -

Then I'd like to share this gift with you.

The Truth About Successful Manifestation

An 8-Day Manifestation Video Series designed to get you UNDERSTANDING ... ACTING ON ... CLEARING THE STUFF in the way of ... and DOING THE FREAKIN' work to manifest SUCCESSFULLY.

Yes?

YES.

Join me here, now -

www.thekatrinaruthshow.com/manifestationfreecourse

Love for 'The Truth About Successful Manifestation'

'Thanks for the 8 day Successful Manifestation challenge!. I have so many things to work on. I was born into the wrong school of life, as you call it, but in my mind have always been in the right school.

Spent too much time listening to wrong thinking. Now getting realigned with who I've always been. You challenge has been a great reminder to me of how to be.'

Gwen Finney

'I just wanted to share my absolute excitement and manifestation proof list! I actually got specific and gave it a timeline - my dream apartment was going to appear and be available for rent by the end of January.

On Tuesday I inspected an apartment that I absolutely fell in love with and KNEW I HAD to have. Today I've been pre-approved because I just submitted my application knowing it was done. In the face of all my conversations about not being 'employed' or being able to prove my income etc ... I'm putting it out and claiming that it's done and that I will be able to pay for it easily and in flow, every month.'

Liora Levin

'Oh my fucking god manifesting is now my middle name!

Since the beginning of this year, I've stepped into manifesting my desired and dream life ... I am living the level of where I want to be before I get there and it's because I've manifested and aligned to my truest and highest level of being!

Everyday that Kat has come on with truths of manifestation, I've stepped in and gone deeper with my life and business plans and today I've had so many firecracker BOOM moments to show me that it's all about pressing play with the delicacy of healing, living and loving a millionaires' world!'

Harmoni Shakti Dowling

'Hey I just wanted to say thank-you so much Katrina Ruth for doing this for us x

I've had a huge breakthrough with my money story already after doing this mindset work. To me now it is completely normal to be tripling my account day trading which happened on Friday after placing my very first trade in the currency market!!

I never trusted myself enough to make my own trading decisions until now ... move over Warren Buffet here I come!!'

Mieko Louise

'I manifested something HUGE into my life today that I think I had been hesitant to even ask the Universe for before watching the videos. I think I felt it was just impossible and could never happen for me. So, I journaled and found blocks in my thinking and journaled some more to figure out how to work them out and I think I am working through those blocks. I am so grateful for everything and feel totally at peace and fully aligned right now. It is an absolutely amazing feeling! THANK YOU KAT!'

Jessica Anglin

'Today I've manifested everything I said I would over the last week!!!!'

I got my date, my massage, my Internet is working today as I said it would, I have money coming back to me from (my) insurance company cleared by tomorrow, and I have connected with 2 coaches that offer training in the area I want.

Now for my next 10 features between Forbes, Fortune, Addicted2success, and the other 7 media outlets by the end of September. Watch me do it. I'm limitless.'

Amanda Hines

'I manifested 2 NEW six-figure sponsors for my event!!!!!!! A big take away has been that I have always been a big dreamer and I realised that deep down I sometimes think I dream too big. That has changed since being here!!!! Thank you Kat!!!!!!!!!!!!'

Laura Radford Garne

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, KATRINA RUTH

Katrina Ruth (formerly Kat (Eden) Loterzo) is a writer based on Australia's sunny Gold Coast. When she isn't furiously unleashing her true message, she is running her multi-million dollar online coaching business as an entertainer, speaker and success mentor to 'the crazy ones'.

With almost 50 best selling eBooks and several hundred product and program launches under her belt Katrina is known as a 'Content Queen' who just doesn't stop. She believes that you CAN have it all, on your terms, so long as you're willing to get honest with yourself about what you're really here to do in the world, and then do the work aka 'press play'.

Before transitioning into her current work Katrina initially built a 7-figure online fitness business by following zero of the 'rules' around internet marketing, and to this day her process includes the truth that YOU know best what is right for you and your audience. Now, as a mentor, she kicks the butts of the world's top entrepreneurs, leaders, visionaries and creators and is arguably the most hardcore chick online.

Katrina lives with her 2 children in her dream sub-penthouse apartment overlooking the ocean. She is obsessed with great coffee, great wifi, great wine and great training of the mind and body, as well as creating as much content as humanly possible on the topic of alignment and taking MASSIVE fucking action.

Katrina is also an expert in "No B.S" coaching and would love to help you create a business and life you love, completely on your terms!

Learn more about Katrina at:

www.thekatrinaruthshow.com/about/

Follow Katrina on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/lifeisnow.pressplay

Sign up for Katrina's FREE 8-Part Video Training Series - **'The Truth About Successful Manifestation'** at:

www.thekatrinaruthshow.com/manifestationfreecourse

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For more kickass books for kickass women (& men), including free downloads go to:

www.booksforkickasswomen.com

Also, don't forget to follow me on Facebook, to keep in touch and get access to my latest Blog posts.

It would be my absolute honour and pleasure to have you in my community and give you the motivation, inspiration, education and butt-kickin' empowerment you need to get out there and create the business and life of your dreams!

I have to warn you though ... my style is somewhat out there. I'm not gonna hold back on saying what I think. I may very well call you on your sh*t ... often. And if I think you're limiting your ability to create what you WANT to create and CAN create then I'll be coming down on you like a ton of bricks. Loving bricks, but still.

YOUR HELP PLEASE!

Did you enjoy this book, find it helpful, or love how it kicked your ass?

I'd love it if you could take 2 minutes of your time to leave a review for this book on Amazon, even if you purchased it direct from my website and not from Amazon. Just search for this book and my name on your Amazon site.

Thank you so much!

And don't forget –

Life is Now. Press Play!

Kat x