

DON'T SWEAT IT!

THE 400-CALORIE DIET

LOW-CARB, INTERMITTENT FASTING, SUGAR-FREE; WHICHEVER WAY YOU GO ABOUT IT, DIETING LEAVES YOU FEELING DEPRIVED. NOT ONLY THAT, ONCE YOU'VE REACHED YOUR GOAL WEIGHT OR DESIRED LEVEL OF BODY FAT, THE RESULTS ARE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN UNLESS YOU SUSTAIN THE SAME LEVEL OF DEPRIVATION ON A PERMANENT BASIS. NOT FUN!

Thankfully, there is a solution and I'm going to reveal this to you. I stay shredded 365 days of the year and I never diet. I eat chocolate and ice cream most days, I drink a glass of red wine with my evening meal and I certainly don't starve myself for endless hours. In fact, I never go hungry and I never say no to what I fancy. How? Read on for the keys to dietary freedom and wake up lean every single day.

THE NON-NEGOTIABLE RULES

The following rules are non-negotiable. That said, I'm very experienced at living an effective dietary lifestyle and I've turned my body into a fat-burning machine. You'll do the same, but in order to reap optimal benefit from week-one, I'd recommend weighing and/or tracking food for 2-3 weeks if you're not familiar with calorie content, weights or macros. Little mistakes will go a long way towards delaying the process.

1. No more than 400 calories per meal. This does not include drink, but I will come to that later.
2. Do not exceed your total recommended daily intake.
3. Always eat if/when you're genuinely hungry.
4. Eating smaller meals and snacks is okay. These count towards your total daily intake.
5. Always consume protein in your first and last meals of the day and where possible, with each meal.
6. Limit processed foods and foods and drinks containing added sugars. Eliminating these almost entirely is preferable.

THE FLEXIBLE (BUT ADVISABLE) PARTS

The following points are advisable but not compulsory. Implementing these points will help you to reap optimal benefit.

1. Consume a maximum of two small (175ml) glasses of wine or two single shot alcoholic beverages with low-cal mixers. Getting 'drunk' will have adverse effects on your long-term health and encourage you to binge eat. It will also take you over your recommended calorie quota.
2. Adhere to the recommended **macronutrient ratios**. You won't always be spot on, but these guides will help sustain a lean physique effortlessly.
3. Stay away from calorie-laden sauces that will take your meal to 200 calories before you've even added the protein!
4. Avoid foods such as breakfast cereals with added-sugars that don't leave you feeling satiated or offer much bang for your buck nutrient-wise.
5. Try to drink at least one full glass of water with every meal or snack.

THE MACROS

Your levels of physical daily activity will drastically affect the number of total calories you'll need to consume in order to carve out and maintain a lean physique. The best indicator or actual requirements is your own body's response; so listen to it. If you don't start visibly dropping body fat within three weeks of initiation, lower your total intake by 100-200 calories per day.

The **macronutrient documents** should act as a guide only. Always seek medical advice from your healthcare practitioner before embarking on any nutrition or exercise plan. If your bodyweight falls between two boundaries, work to the nearest available weight. For example, if you're 63kg, use the 65kg quantities, then when you reach 62kg, drop down to the 60kg category.

WHEN TO EAT, WHAT TO EAT AND WHY?

The when, what and why attitude to food will help you to eliminate the things you don't need to consume and give priority to the meals and snacks your body will use to torch fat and build lean muscle.

WHEN?

DO consume PROTEIN during the post-workout window. A **shake or high-protein snack** post-workout will suffice. Your body needs amino acids to repair and rebuild lean muscle tissue.

DO consume fast digesting carbohydrates post-workout. Your body needs glycogen to help replenish the stores it used during training and prevent it from having to tap into protein stores/ muscle tissue.

DO NOT consume fat post-workout. This can inhibit the uptake of amino acids.

DO consume protein with your first meal of the day. This encourages the production of glucagon which helps your body to burn fat.

DO enjoy slow-release proteins before bed. **Casein protein** is a great option if you take supplements. Evening snacking food alternatives include Greek yoghurt, SKYR, nuts and seeds.

WHAT DOES 400 CALORIES LOOK LIKE?

You can use MyFitnessPal to track calories and macronutrients. You'll soon become accustomed to eyeballing meals without having to weigh or measure. As a visual guide, here's what 400 calories looks like on your plate.

400 CALORIES:

- 2 eggs, 2 slices wholegrain toast, half a large avocado
- 150g grilled chicken breast, 100g cooked white rice, large portion of green veg
- 100g Greek yoghurt, 100g berries, 50g oats
- Does it Matter if I Consume Fewer than 400 Calories in One Meal?
- Not at all! Having a small handful of nuts or a couple of rice cakes won't throw you off. The key is not going over the 400-calorie quota and staying within the macro boundaries.