



THE TEN FORGOTTEN RULES OF WEIGHT LOSS

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CONTENTS

DON'T DIET	1
PUT THE SCALE AWAY	2
FORGET ABOUT TARGETING FAT LOSS	3
CALORIE QUALITY NOT QUANTITY	4
THERE IS NO MAGICAL MACRONUTRIENT RATIO	5
EAT ENOUGH CALORIES TO LOSE WEIGHT	6
MAKE SMALL CHANGES	7
IMPLEMENT STRENGTH TRAINING	8
WEIGHT LOSS DOESN'T OCCUR IN A STRAIGHT LINE	9
DON'T GIVE UP	10

FIRST



RULE

DON'T DIET

It sounds like a bit of an oxymoron, but the key to successful long-term weight loss is to not diet. Diets have end dates. They conjure up images of flavorless food, and feelings of hunger and deprivation.

Don't get me wrong. I'm actually a big fan of diets. I think they teach you a lot about nutrition, and even about yourself. They teach you how to determine proper portion sizes. They teach you how to count calories. They teach you how to deal with your relationship with food. However, diets are short-term solutions to long-term problems.

What happens when that diet is over? Are you as lost as you were when you started? Did you even make it to the end of the diet? Do you think you could be on this diet for the rest of your life?

The only way to successfully lose weight for the long-term is to undergo a lifestyle change. It was your lifestyle that got you to where you are now, and it's your lifestyle that's going to get you to where you want to be.

Stop looking at nutrition as a "what am I going to eat on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc" thing, and start looking at it as a "is this a good, healthy food choice" thing. Proper nutrition comes from making the right food choices. Once you get rid of all the processed food in your diet, the weight loss is a pleasant side effect.

That's right, weight loss is a side effect. Focus on having a goal of being healthy. Treat nutrition as fuel for your body. Fuel to exercise. Fuel to build muscle. Fuel to ward off disease, and fuel for every other 1,000,000 functions your body completes.

Once you start making good food choices and forming healthy habits, and stop thinking about eating right as an act of restriction, you can start seeing the bigger picture, and your body will react in kind by ridding itself of the extra fat and calories it no longer needs.

It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle change.

SECOND



RULE

PUT THE SCALE AWAY

How much do you weigh? Just about everyone knows that number. Unfortunately, that number is close to being as meaningless as can be. What is weight? It's a measurement of the force of gravity on your body. It tells you how heavy a particular mass is. Why does this matter? If I put two people side by side that both weigh 150 pounds, but one person has 8% body fat, and the other has 40% body fat, will the scale be able to tell the difference? NO!

Now, the scale does have some benefits, and we'll get to that in a minute. However, for the purpose of tracking your fitness progress, no other measuring tool has caused more physical and emotional destruction than the scale. It has caused depression and feelings of hopelessness. It has made people want to give up and throw in the towel. It has made our society obsessed over weight.

The thing is, you don't really want to lose weight. You want to lose fat. While these two things can be one in the same, they aren't always. When someone says they lost 10 pounds, how much of that was actually body fat, and how much of that was muscle mass? Someone who lost 10 pounds of fat is going to look a lot different than someone who lost 5 pounds of fat and 5 pounds of muscle. The scale can't tell you this.

Do yourself a favor and go put your scale out of site for the next month. Don't even take it out again for another 30 days. Do you feel like you can do that? If you can't, you might have an unhealthy obsession with weight. Don't let the scale rule your life. The scale is just one of many tools to track your progress.

What is the scale good for? It's good for determining body fat mass for when you're taking body fat readings. You can't take body fat readings with a scale. You need calipers ([here's a \\$5 pair of body fat calipers you should invest in](#)), or you need to go and get a body scan of some sort. Once you have your weight, you can measure body fat percentage. From there, you can calculate body fat mass and lean body mass. These are the two numbers that really matter.

At some point during this week, make a goal to take some before measurements. You can do this several ways. You can take a before picture. You can take body fat caliper measurements. You can use a tape measure to measure the circumference of your waist, chest, hips, and thighs. You can also simply take notice of how your clothes fit.

All of these methods for measuring progress are better than using the scale. The scale should be a motivational tool, but not motivation that is grown from fear and depression of being overweight, but of motivation developed from seeing your hard work paying off.

Stay off the scale. Your mind and body will thank you.

THIRD



RULE

FORGET ABOUT TARGETING FAT LOSS

It's one of the most common myths out there - the ability to target fat loss in any one area. People will do sit-ups in vain trying to get a firmer stomach. They'll do all kinds of leg and butt exercises to tone up the area. Unfortunately, you didn't get to choose where the fat went on, and you don't get to choose where it comes off.

Fat loss is systemic in nature. It is not localized. When you exercise or are in a caloric deficit, your body releases fat mobilizing hormones to fuel its function. Within a few seconds and heartbeats, those hormones are dispersed throughout your entire body. From there, they start mobilizing fat stores to be used as energy.

We all store fat differently. Where we tend to store it most is a function of many variables. Testosterone, estrogen, genetics, and insulin sensitivity are just a few of those variables that help determine where your excess calories are going to be stored. On top of that, how you put fat on could be very different from how you take it back off.

Start thinking of body fat as one giant mass instead of the combination of many parts. It is not butt fat, ab fat, leg fat, or arm fat. It is body fat. Your body has a certain percentage of body fat on it, and that number can be manipulated, but you are never going to have six pack abs, while at the same time have a high body fat percentage.

Focus on lowering your body fat percentage, and the muscles you've been working so hard to build will start to show through. We all have six pack abs already. Some of us just have a layer of fat covering them. If you want those abs to show through, forget about doing ab exercises, and start focusing on your nutrition.

As the saying goes - abs are made in the kitchen. Your diet is going to play the biggest role in controlling your body fat percentage. If you want to target fat loss - change your body fat percentage,

Your diet is the key.

FOURTH

COACH

CALORIE

RULE

CALORIE QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

I'm eating x,xxx amount of calories and I still can't lose weight. Sound like you? Don't get me wrong, calorie quantity is important - very important actually, but that's not all that matters - the quality of those calories is just as important.

Take two extremes: a 1500 calorie diet comprised of nothing but sugar, and a 1500 calorie diet comprised of lean protein, healthy fats, and low-glycemic carbohydrates. Do you think that the all-sugar diet will give you the same results as the more balanced diet?

Obviously, this is an extreme example used to make a point, but the point still stands even when the extremes aren't so extreme. Your body doesn't just need calories, it also needs nutrients. Calories are energy, but nutrients are what provide your body with the necessary ingredients for efficient fat burning, hormone production, and nearly every other function of the human body.

Certain nutrients are essential. Essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals all need to be ingested through your diet for proper body function. Your body is a very smart machine. It is not going to start ridding itself of stored energy if it's not getting all the nutrients it requires.

Not eating enough essential fatty acids? Your body will send out hunger signals until you do consume enough of these. **I supplement with omega-3 oil.** Too little protein? Your mood and ability to build muscle and boost your metabolism will suffer.

Focus on eating a nutrient dense diet. Keep an eye on your calorie intake, but if you're eating a diet consisting of whole foods and you're strength training, I think you'd be surprised at how difficult it is to remain at a high body fat. It's just not that easy to consume too many calories eating nothing but whole foods. You really have to try if you want to put on weight.

Eat your veggies. Eat your protein (**I recommend NOW Foods whey protein isolate**). Eat your essential fatty acids. Eat enough carbohydrates to fuel your exercise. Make the most of the calories you're eating.

The weight loss will come naturally.

FIFTH

COACH

CALORIE

RULE

THERE IS NO MAGICAL MACRONUTRIENT RATIO

How many carbohydrates should you eat? How much fat? How much protein? Those are questions just about everyone asks as they get ready to embark on their weight loss program. Three simple questions, yet anyone who has looked for the answers, knows that the answers aren't quite so simple after all.

That's because there is no one-size-fits-all macronutrient ratio for fat loss. I've seen people lose weight eating 60% carbohydrates, and I've seen people lose weight eating close to 0 grams of carbohydrates. Fat and protein grams have been all over the spectrum too. There are very few absolutes when it comes to macronutrient ratios, but there are some very basic guidelines that everyone needs to follow if they want to be successful.

Protein is an essential macronutrient, and is needed in larger quantities for active people. In addition, a higher protein intake can help prevent muscle loss in a hypo-caloric environment. Try aiming for .75 - 1 gram per pound of lean body mass. If you don't hit that number every day, that's OK, but be conscious of how much protein you're getting. Make sure that you're eating a source of protein at each of your meals. If you need to supplement, I personally use and recommend **NOW Foods whey protein isolate**.

Fat is also an essential macronutrient. More specifically, essential fatty acids are. Those on an extremely low fat diet may have a difficult time getting in this nutrient. Fat is important for many vital functions, and is absolutely necessary if you want to lose fat. Try eating food sources that are high in omega-3 fatty acids. Foods like fatty fish, nuts, eggs, seeds, **flax oil**, and **fish oil** can help you reach your essential fat requirements.

No other macronutrient has caused more confusion than carbohydrates. Carbohydrate intake has become like religion for many people. They will defend their view on high carb or low carb to the grave. Here's the thing though. People have been successful eating all quantities of carbs.

What I have found though, is that you have to be careful that you aren't eating too many carbohydrates for your activity level. If you are a highly active individual, eat them! If you're not very active, you aren't going to need as many.

Carbohydrates fuel high intensity exercise and brain function. More specifically, glucose does, but carbohydrates are the primary source of glucose in people's diets. Set your carbohydrate intake at a level that is commensurate to your activity level. Don't eat 0 carbs because that's the fad diet of the year, and don't eat several hundred of them every day because your favorite athlete does. Find your intake that is personalized for you.

There you have it - your basic rundown of your macronutrient requirements. As you can see, there are no solid numbers. Losing weight and living a healthy lifestyle is not about a daily mathematical formula. It's about eating the right foods and emphasizing certain macronutrients based on your goals.

Feeling a lack of energy during your workouts? Eat more carbohydrates. Not recovering good enough? Try upping your protein intake. It's about eating more and eating less, not about eating 152 grams of protein, 137 grams of carbs, and 77 grams of fat. Be realistic. Focus on eating quality food, and leave all the macronutrient ratios to the people writing books.

SIXTH



RULE

EAT ENOUGH CALORIES TO LOSE WEIGHT

So you're ready to embark on this new fitness lifestyle, and you do what most people do when they want to lose weight - exercise more, and eat less. Unfortunately, most people sabotage their weight loss efforts before they even get started. They do this by not eating enough calories to lose weight.

Seem like a bit of an oxymoron? After all, we've been taught that if we eat less we'll lose weight. This is true, but with several conditional statements. There is a sweet spot with calorie intake that will make it much easier for you to lose fat and hold onto valuable muscle. While there are those people that still eat too much to lose weight, there's an even greater amount of people who eat too little.

When you eat too little food, you restrict the amount of nutrients your body gets. Not only that, but you end up having to fight an uphill battle against fat loss that almost always ends in you losing. Eating too few calories slows down your thyroid, negatively impacts hormones, and slows down your metabolism - and that's just the short list.

How many calories should you eat to lose weight? That's the million dollar question. Those calorie calculators might give you a good starting point, but none of them are going to nail down your required calorie intake. How could they? There are millions of unique people, with unique metabolisms, with unique lifestyles, that are inputting numbers into a calculator that uses a single formula to determine calorie intake. They give you a great starting point, but that's all they do. I've been using the [BodyMedia FIT armband](#) to accurately track my daily calorie burn and to set my calorie intake. I'm very impressed with this device.

When you start a new fitness program, you start placing a new and large amount of stress on your body. You more than likely went from a sedentary lifestyle to exercising nearly every day. This is not the time to get impatient with weight loss and start drastically cutting calories. Eating less and less food is not going to give you faster results. Just the opposite actually.

Always aim high with your calories. It is much easier to come down in calories than it is to come up. Always eat as much food as possible to lose weight. Try setting your calories at 12 times your body weight. Eat that many calories for at least two weeks before you even think about lowering them.

Do not gauge your progress over that time with the scale. [Buy a cheap pair of body fat calipers](#) and take body fat measurements. If your body fat has decreased over those two weeks, but your weight is still the same - don't change a thing. This means you are adding muscle and losing body fat, which is what every fitness lover hopes to accomplish. You are changing your body composition for the better.

In time, you might have to lower your calories, but I think you might be surprised at the drastic changes your body is undergoing, and you might not have to change a thing. Instead, you've just experienced an epiphany and noticed the difference between fat loss and weight loss first hand. Vary rarely does anyone need to go below 10 times their body weight in calories to lose weight. Start high, be patient, and your body will start changing right in front of your eyes.

MAKE SMALL CHANGES

This forgotten rule seems so simple, yet the majority of people don't even give it any thought. It's most likely a result of over-enthusiasm towards undergoing a new fitness program. Many people's desire to get fit sparks from a single moment of motivation. This motivation is great, but can set you up for failure if you don't learn how to harness its effects.

Make small changes until they become habit, and then make another small change. Repeat. That is the real secret to developing new healthy habits. It's not about doing everything now that you're going to be doing 6 months from now. It's about knowing what you're going to be doing 6 months from now, and taking small steps that will eventually add up to get you there.

The great news is that making small changes is much easier to do than going full bore from day one. On top of that, the odds of you sticking with your new lifestyle increase exponentially once each new change becomes habit.

Is it impossible to lose weight making all the changes at once? Of course not. It might be the fastest way to get from point A to point B, but faster is not always better. If there's one thing you need to learn, it's that weight loss will test your patience. Patience and consistency are major keys to your success.

What does this "small changes" process look like? If you're a diet soda drinker, and you drink 1 diet soda a day, try to cut back to 2 per week for the first week. Don't make any other changes. Your only goal for the week is to go from 7 to 2 diet sodas a week. Once you've accomplished that, it's time to make the next small change. Next up might be to add veggies to each of your meals. The following week you might start adding in 2 days of exercise a week. The next week you increase your protein intake. The next? Increase your workout days to 3.

I think you see the progression. Most importantly though, do not move on to the next small change until you've mastered the small change you're working on. You might not get it right the first week. Don't worry about it. This isn't a race. The next week you're going to do it again. It's your only goal for the week, and if you focus on it, you're going to eventually accomplish it.

Once those small changes start adding up, you start to realize that things start getting easier to change. Eventually, you can't believe you were ever living that old lifestyle. You're a new person now, and you can never go back to the old you.

Keep making those small changes. Before you even notice it, that amazing side effect of being healthy - weight loss, starts to change your body right before your eyes. It's a great feeling, and the best thing is that those new habits have become a lifestyle that will change you and last forever.

EIGHTH

COACH

CALORIE

RULE

IMPLEMENT STRENGTH TRAINING

It's time to lose weight. What are you going to do for exercise? If you're like many people, you immediately start thinking about walking, running, or some other form of cardio. Cardiovascular training is great for you, but it's not the most effective form of exercise for weight loss - strength training is.

Let's go ahead and clear up some confusion. Many people separate weight training from cardio. They assume you have to do both. You do not. If you perform your weight training with enough intensity, it can be very "cardiovascular" in nature. Your heart does not know the difference between running on a treadmill and lifting weights. It only knows perceived stress. Push yourself hard enough, and your heart rate can go well above what it would doing long-duration, steady-state cardio.

All that being said, don't go and stop doing your cardio. Instead, if you're doing only cardio every day, swap out some cardio days for strength training days. Strength training is the real key to successful body transformation. It's what's going to rev up your metabolism, build muscle, and create a highly favorable metabolic environment for fat loss.

Many people assume you should be exercising in the fat burning zone to burn fat. While you might burn a higher proportion of calories from fat during exercise by keeping your heart rate down, you do not necessarily burn more total fat calories. You definitely don't burn more fat calories the rest of your day.

The physical activity you perform is about creating a favorable metabolic environment for fat loss so that proper nutrition can help you drop body fat. Without muscle and a good hormonal profile, you are fighting an uphill battle to lose fat.

Strength training boosts testosterone and growth hormone, and improves insulin sensitivity. These hormones (testosterone, growth hormone, insulin) are three of the most powerful fat loss and muscle building hormones that you want on your side. Yes, that goes for women too!

You don't need a gym to strength train either. Nor do you have to use weights (although I highly recommend it). You can always use your body weight for resistance. Whichever method you choose for strength training, the key is to make sure you are pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, with a goal to get stronger from workout to workout. Whether that means you're lifting more weight, doing more reps, or decreasing the amount of rest time between sets, the point is that you're getting stronger, building muscle, and putting your body in a good position to drop body fat.

Don't be afraid to strength train. You are not going to bulk up from it. You bulk up from a bad diet and excess calories. Strength training does nothing but help you reach your goals. Make sure you're adding this powerful weapon to your weight loss arsenal.



WEIGHT LOSS DOESN'T OCCUR IN A STRAIGHT LINE

Think back to how you put on weight in the first place. Did you put on the weight in a straight line from point A to point B? It's highly unlikely. What is likely, is that while your weight trended up, it was interspersed with small periods of weight loss. If you were to graph it out, you would see a zig zag that had an overall upward trend.

If you put on weight in this matter, why do you think you can lose it differently? Many people religiously weigh themselves, and they set an artificial ceiling on their weight. They absolutely freak out if it goes above this number. When this happens, emotions spiral out of control. You want to give up. You question whether what you're doing is right. Fear takes over.

One thing is fairly certain when it comes to weight loss, and that is you will never be at a lower weight every single day you weigh yourself. That being said, it is much more likely that you have linear fat loss. What does that mean? It means that it's possible for you to continuously lose fat on a day to day basis. How likely that is can be up for debate, but it certainly isn't impossible.

Now, weight and fat are not always one in the same. The biggest variable in weight fluctuation is water. It's estimated that 60% or more of the human body is water. For a 150 pound person, that is 90 pounds of water. Is it that hard to believe that your weight could fluctuate drastically on a daily basis?

Intracellular water, subcutaneous water, water in your food, water you drink, carbohydrate intake, and hormonal cycles will all contribute to fluctuations in water weight. The average person can store 500 grams of glycogen. Glycogen is the fuel your body stores from glucose. Along with every gram of glucose, your body stores about 3 grams of water with it. If you do the math, that's 4 pounds of water right there. It's also 4 pounds of water stored inside your muscle. This is what you want!

However, people see that number on the scale creep above their artificial ceiling, and they don't care. They are so obsessed with that number, that anything other than "lower" is unacceptable.

I can't emphasize enough that people with a weight obsession stay off the scale during their transition to a healthy lifestyle. Have faith that what you are doing is working.

Measure your body fat and take progress pictures. Notice how your clothes fit. Are people commenting on how you look? All of these things will keep you motivated. The scale? It shows you how crazy you really are.

TENTH



RULE

DON'T GIVE UP

How many times have you started a weight loss program, only to get frustrated and throw in the towel? Frustration and lack of results are two of the biggest killers of motivation. What many people don't realize is just how close they came to actually achieving their weight loss goals.

Weight loss is not linear. It does not occur in a straight line. If you're making small changes to develop new healthy habits, your weight might not change for weeks. You can't use weight as your only measure of success. If you're successfully changing your habits, you are making progress. The scale might not reflect that progress - yet, but it will in time. You just have to be patient.

Remember that fitness is a lifestyle. There is no end date. There is no rush. You can change your life, but you have to stop thinking about weight loss as a day to day event. Weight loss is a side effect of healthy living, not a cause of it.

Too many times I get questions from frustrated individuals about how for the last month they've been eating healthy and exercising nearly every day, and they've only lost 2 pounds. I'm so happy for these people, yet they don't see the progress they've made. Start looking at how far you've come instead of how far you have to go.

When people tell me their frustrations, I think - wow, this person changed their lifestyle. They got rid of processed foods and got active. They've more than likely lowered their cholesterol levels, lowered their blood pressure, improved their Vo2 max, improved their endurance, improved their strength, and have improved 100 other measures of health and fitness. What a success!

But they see things differently. They beat themselves up because they've done all that hard work and have only lost 2 of the 50+ pounds they have to lose. They extrapolate those numbers into the future, and they just don't see how they can continue at their current pace for the next 2 years. They get discouraged, and end up quitting and resorting to their old habits.

Oh if they only knew how close they were! Stick with it. The weight will come off when it's ready to, and not a moment sooner. It's easy to think of weight loss as a mathematical formula where it's all about calories, but it's really not. There are too many variables that come into play.

There is only one truth, and it's if you stick to healthy eating and exercise, and never give up, your body will return the favor in kind. It no longer will have a need for stored body fat. Your body will become its function. You become what you eat and do. You become the new lifestyle you've created.

Weight loss happens the moment you don't give up.