

# 8 RULES of FAT LOSS

*Lose fat, feel better and take  
control of your health.*



BEN MATLAK  
MS, CSCS

## 1. CREATE A CALORIC DEFICIT

Despite what you hear from gurus preaching weight loss from eating pounds of bacon and butter every day, the quantity of food (calories) we eat matters when it comes to fat loss. While



viewing it as a simple math equation (*calories in* minus *calories out*) is a bit over-simplistic, the general idea holds true. **To lose fat, we need to consume fewer calories than we burn.**

There are many different strategies for this, each of which can be effective. Popular diets like the Mediterranean Diet, Paleo, Keto, and Whole 30 force you to cut out certain types of food. The result is pretty simple: when you have fewer

choices, you're probably going to eat less.

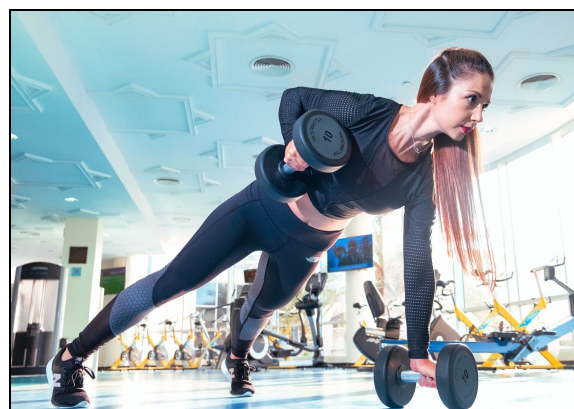
The problem with restrictive eating is that it can become difficult to sustain over time. How many times have you gone on a diet for a few weeks or a few months, only to fall back into your previous habits and your previous weight?

A sustainable fat-loss plan must take into account your preferences and habits. You must make small changes over time to create a sustainable way of eating, rather than going on a temporary "diet" that will eventually overwhelm you and lead to failure.

## 2. INCORPORATE STRENGTH TRAINING

Strength training (aka resistance training) involves using the force of your muscles against resistance. Resistance can come from a variety of sources including dumbbells, kettlebells, bands, rocks, logs, or your own body weight.

Strength training breaks down your muscles. As they repair themselves, your muscles come back stronger and more resilient.



Muscle mass helps us maintain a healthy metabolism. The more muscle mass our body has, the more calories we burn throughout the day.

While trying to lose fat, many people forget the importance of muscle. Someone may lose 20 pounds by doing lots of cardio and cutting calories. Unfortunately, a lot of that 20 pounds is probably muscle. Now, with less muscle, their metabolism drops, meaning it's easier to pack on that weight after returning to normal habits. They get frustrated when they realize their next attempt at fat loss will be even more challenging. It's a vicious cycle.



How do we avoid losing muscle when we lose weight?

### **Strength training.**

It can help maintain what you already have, and it can also increase the amount of muscle mass your body holds, which increases your metabolism.

Other benefits of (proper) strength training include:

- Improved bone density
- Improved insulin sensitivity (decreasing risk of type 2 diabetes)
- Lower risk of injury
- Improved self-esteem
- Enhanced speed, power, balance, and agility
- Improved body composition
- Decreased blood pressure
- Decreased bad cholesterol levels

**WHEN IT COMES TO EXERCISE, STRENGTH TRAINING IS YOUR MOST POWERFUL TOOL IN THE GYM.**

## **3. EAT PROTEIN AT EVERY MEAL**

Protein is highly satiating, meaning it can fill you up and reduce hunger and appetite. People eating more protein often find themselves eating fewer calories overall, as they feel less likely

to snack. If you're hungry in the middle of the afternoon, consider a high-protein snack (mixed nuts, jerky, hard-boiled egg, apple with peanut/almond butter).



For losing fat, protein may be the most important nutritional component. It helps prevent muscle loss when losing weight. The weight you lose will much more likely be from fat (and not muscle).

When trying to lose weight, **combining a moderately high protein intake with strength training will put you on the best path to long-term success.** You'll be able to maintain or even increase muscle mass (improving strength

and keeping your metabolism higher), which keeps your weight loss more permanent and prevents the typical "yo-yo" changes in your weight.

#### How much?

The typical recommendation you see (46-56 g/day) is meant to "prevent deficiency." That does NOT mean it is optimal, especially if you're regularly exercising and strength training.

For active individuals, especially those taking part in high-intensity exercise and strength training, 0.65-1 g per pound of bodyweight would be a good range to ensure proper recovery and protein synthesis in the body. So someone weighing 150 lbs will want to aim for at least 100 g of protein per day. This may be higher than many people think. But remember...this is for an active population that exercises regularly, which is (unfortunately) not the average American.



People living more sedentary lives, or only working out one or two days per week, may need slightly less, but the typical recommendation of 46-56 g/day is too low for most.

## 4. LOAD UP ON VEGGIES

Vegetables are nutritional powerhouses. As a species, humans have been consuming them for most of our existence. Our bodies and digestive systems are built to process and harvest all the beneficial nutrients, unlike a lot of processed food people eat today.

One of their most powerful benefits is the amount of **micronutrients** they contain. While we often hear about **macronutrients** (fat, protein, carbs), **micronutrients** provide huge benefits. They include things like antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients, all of which our bodies need to function optimally.

Vegetables can help preserve bone and muscle mass. They also contain lots of water and fiber which help keep us hydrated and keep us fuller for longer (sidenote: many people who increase their fruit and veggie intake report noticing better skin, likely because of the improved hydration and extra antioxidants).

To recap, eating more vegetables can provide the following benefits:

- Help you stay fuller for longer, which will aid in fat loss
- Help improve your digestion and hydration
- Help avoid nutrient deficiencies
- Help reduce your risk of disease
- Help improve recovery and performance
- Help boost your immune system
- Help fight stress, damage, and inflammation within your body



Research has shown that variety is very important in terms of the benefits we receive. Eating a wide range of vegetables will provide the most benefits.

## 5. LIMIT LIQUID CALORIES

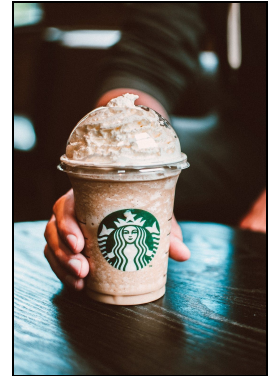
In America, we're pretty good at sneaking extra calories into just about everything, which is probably why we have a major health crisis with obesity and metabolic disorders.

Soft drinks, energy drinks, and juices are some of the big culprits. Even "natural" fruit juice is almost nothing but sugar.



But the drink that has become the most destructive to people's waistlines is coffee drinks. Not only do many of them contain hundreds of calories, but we tend to drink them on a regular basis. So instead of a sweet drink once a while as a treat, it becomes a daily frappuccino with 500 calories. And the calories in these drinks are almost exclusively from sugar, so we're getting no nutritional value. Instead, we're getting a spike in blood sugar and insulin, shifting our bodies into *fat-storing* mode.

If you can avoid high-calorie drinks and focus mostly on things like water, flavored water, black (or very lightly sweetened) coffee and tea, you can save yourself a lot of calories throughout the day.



## 6. SLEEP

Research has found that people getting less than 7 hours of sleep per night are significantly more likely to be obese.

Getting less sleep is also correlated with a greater risk for diabetes, heart attack, and stroke. And people who sleep less tend to get sick more often.

Your body does its best recovery work during sleep. If you're trying to recover from workouts and stress, sleep is when our body does most of its maintenance - the immune system recharges to fight viruses and bacteria, and hormones work to keep your cells functioning



optimally. So if you notice you're taking longer to recover from workouts, or want to start increasing your training load for a goal like fat loss, sleep is extremely important.

We know...life happens. There are kids, pets, spouses - a lot of things that can interfere with sleep. But do the best you can. Don't add more hurdles by playing on your phone late at night, or reading stressful emails before bed.

Here are some helpful tips to get some better ZZZs tonight:

- Keep your bedroom as dark as possible
- Limit alcohol and caffeine - avoid caffeine after 2pm

- Limit fluids before bed - frequent bathroom breaks will interrupt sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Spend time outside during the day to keep your circadian rhythm on track
- Keep your room cool - for many people, keeping the temperature below 68 degrees is optimal for sleep
- Put down your phone!
- Be consistent with your bedtime throughout the week
- Read, meditate, and/or stretch before bed

## 7. DON'T FORGET FOOD QUALITY

While the *quantity* of food and calories is important, food *quality* is often overlooked. Imagine eating 2,000 calories a day of cinnamon rolls, brownies, cookies, and pop tarts. Then imagine eating 2,000 calories of fresh greens, grass-fed beef, wild-caught salmon, and organic vegetables. Would you feel the same after each one? No way! Your body craves quality food.



**Quality** means good macronutrients (fat, protein, and carbohydrates) as well as good micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients). Eating sugar and refined carbohydrates will give you plenty of carbs, but almost no healthy fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, or phytonutrients, which means your body will still be hungry because it's looking for those essential nutrients. You'll continue eating.

The food we eat also has a big impact on our hormones. Hormones affect nearly every aspect of our health, including appetite and the way we process food. By eating the wrong types of food, we program our body to store extra fat. Think about that. We could eat the exact same meal as our "thin" friend, and our body may store more fat than theirs. It seems unfair, but we need to use this knowledge to improve our eating to get our hormones working for us rather than against us by choosing whole, minimally-processed food.

## 8. PRIORITIZE CONSISTENCY

More important than what specific foods you're eating or what your training plan looks like is **CONSISTENCY**. You can be on the most perfect plan in the world that guarantees a six-pack and a magazine-cover physique. But if you can't follow it consistently, you will not succeed.

Don't worry if your plan is perfect. Start one or two good habits. If you do these things CONSISTENTLY over time, you WILL be successful.

## 9. Bonus: BE A NICE HUMAN BEING

Be a good person and respect people's differences. You'll be much happier and healthier as a nice person than a jerk :)

## CONCLUSION

When it comes to health, the biggest challenge isn't necessarily knowing WHAT to do, but rather HOW to go about it and HOW to stay consistent over a long period of time.

Having someone with you is key. It may be a partner or friend who's going along the same journey as you. It could be a coach or trainer or someone who can answer questions and point you in the right direction through different challenges. But don't try to do this journey alone. It's nearly impossible to achieve significant lifestyle goals without any help or support.

Don't try to attack all of these goals at once. Your brain and your body aren't built to handle such drastic changes. Find the lowest-hanging fruit - the things that will be easiest to address immediately. Once you build momentum, it becomes easier to implement more changes.

Most importantly, just get started. Like today. Do SOMETHING to move you in the right direction. Maybe it's eating some vegetables with your next meal. Maybe it's going to bed a little earlier tonight, or scheduling your next workout or walk. Maybe it's revising this week's grocery list to include more protein and vegetables. Whatever it is, start your journey RIGHT NOW.



Feel free to check out our other free resources at [bstrongbellevue.com/free-resources/](https://bstrongbellevue.com/free-resources/)

Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. Thanks for reading!

[train@bstrongbellevue.com](mailto:train@bstrongbellevue.com)