
Diet Variation

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I coach many individuals who suffer from hormone dysregulation and the inability to lose weight, regardless of following a strict diet and exercise regime. From these clients, I've learned effective techniques to break through the frustrating state of weight loss resistance, as we simultaneously work upstream to identify the real cause (R:1) of why they can't lose weight or don't feel well. Since studying and experimenting with many ancient health principles and ancestral lifestyle habits, I discovered a strategy that is one of the quickest ways to lose weight, and also supports healing at the cellular level. I've observed outstanding results with very challenged clients, but the tactic is great for anyone who wants to get leaner and feel better in the modern age of GMOs, toxins galore, and numerous physical, chemical, and emotional stressors.

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Reflection upon our rich history, there is plenty to be learned from our ancestors to live healthier modern lives. During time spent visiting beautiful Jackson Hole, Wyoming, I came across some powerful principles that I've implemented with the clients I coach, and in my own life, with great success. One of the strategies I call diet variation, an adaptive technique that takes advantage of the body's innate desire to survive. I've found that when we vary our diet, the hormonal shifts for adaptation re-establish and trigger the body's ability to burn fat for energy. Diet variation is one of the quickest ways to lose weight! Pretty cool, eh?

Upon studying our ancestors' lifestyle and eating patterns, I noted that they didn't eat the same foods 365 days a year. During the cold season they would stockpile meat and animal fat to provide hardy sustenance for energy and it was food that could be stored and used throughout the season. Once spring and summer returned, vegetables and fruit were abundant, which they consumed to their heart's content. Nature's perfect timing provided a high-fat diet in the winter for strength, and shifted to a lighter, plant-based diet in warmer months to provide other key nutrients. The variation delivered the nutrition needed to survive each season, thereby keeping them healthy and adapted year-round. This is how our bodies were designed to thrive: eating seasonally, locally, and exclusively whole foods.

Why Eating 3-5 Meals a Day Could Be Aging You

Our bodies were also set up to survive and thrive in times of both feast and famine. Eating in correspondence with the seasons was the first thing our ancestors did right (not that they had a choice). In addition, they did not sit down to 3 squares meals plus 2 snacks per day, at regular time intervals. Their ever-changing environment required them to follow a feast or famine style of life, characterized by alternating periods when food was either in abundance or short supply. Therefore, they ate when food was available and fasted when food was not. Contrary to popular thought, the periods of lack and abundance of food were actually beneficial to their health because the body was designed for it. It's perfectly natural to be physically uncomfortable at times and experience true hunger, a feeling to which many today are unaccustomed. And going without food for short periods has some extraordinary health benefits, such as re-booting the immune system, improving insulin sensitivity, promoting longevity, repairing the digestive tract, increasing anti-aging Human Growth Hormone (HGH), and most importantly, reducing cellular inflammation, the root cause of most present-day disease.

A modern application of this principle is intermittent fasting (IF). I've written many times about the advantages and styles of IF and am a huge believer in fasting as a tool for restoring health. There are different ways to approach fasting: one can choose to eat within a compressed time window each day (daily IF), fast a day or two each week, or do longer block fasts for 4 or more consecutive days. Fasting helps to diminish food cravings, the need to eat on a regular schedule, and can help you look and

feel younger (via the boost in HGH). Since implementing fasting with my clients and myself I've observed incredible benefits, and truly believe it's one of the most unappreciated and under used healing tools available.

Becoming a Fat-Burner

Before our ancestors started growing grains for food, most were in a state of ketosis many times a year. When in a ketotic state, carbohydrate intake is so low that the body shifts over from burning glucose as a primary source of fuel to using fat its own fat stores for energy. Essentially, when in ketosis you become a "fat burner" instead of a "sugar burner." Our ancestors remained in ketosis during the cold season, eating a low-carbohydrate diet of mostly meat and lots of quality fat, and then naturally shifted out of ketosis in the summer due to the consumption of plentiful seasonal produce.

I think it's important to point out that healthy humans have the ability to burn both fat and glucose for energy, but because glucose is potentially damaging to the cell it will burn the glucose first to protect itself. Pretty smart, right? But what happens when we consume a high carb diet rich in grains (even whole), fruits, and modern day carbs like sports drinks and bars as our daily routine? You end up stuck in sugar burning mode with no hormonal ability to burn fat for energy.

The constant glucose spikes drives cellular inflammation and our cells ability to hear the hormones we need to burn fat. Thyroid hormone, leptin and insulin all play a significant role in our ability to use our fat for energy. When our cells can't get the message from these hormones due to an inflamed cell membrane (driven by a constant high carb diet), you can't burn stored fat despite what you eat and how much you exercise... AKA "weight-loss resistance".

Today, nearly all Americans are stuck in a sugar-burning state, which promotes chronic inflammation, cellular oxidation, and premature aging. The state of ketosis, conversely, helps to slow down the body's aging process because it down-regulates inflammation and oxidative stress. Ketosis also positively impacts many common and chronic health conditions, and I've found it to be especially helpful for neurodegenerative diseases and weight-loss resistance. The high intake of good dietary fat helps the brain function better via an increase in ketones, which are the byproduct of fat metabolism and the brain's preferred source of fuel. Eating lots of good fat also helps to fix the hormone receptors located on the cell membrane (also made of fat) which supports hormone balance to produce weight-loss (for more in-depth info on ketosis and the diet, read my two part article series: part 1 and part 2). I've used ketosis as a tool with some of my most challenged clients, and myself, with great success. Once cellular inflammation is down-regulated remarkable things start to happen, and the body can begin to heal itself.

A permanent keto-adaptation diet is not for everyone; however, utilizing the diet as a tool to move in and out of has been a little miracle I discovered by chance. There are those who struggle to get into ketosis for reasons such as perimenopause, thyroid conditions, and/or toxicity. There are also those who get in to ketosis and still don't lose weight. Read on, there is still hope!

The Magic Bullet for Weight-Loss Resistance

But what's one to do if the ketogenic diet isn't producing weight-loss? Enter diet variation. I began implementing the method of diet variation because I had clients who were simply not able to keto-adapt or lose weight when in ketosis. In a healthy individual, ketosis should be one of the quickest ways to lose weight; however, if suffering from certain hormonal challenges, typically driven by cellular toxicity, one does not easily shift into the fat burning state. The keto-adaptation phase, i.e. shifting from a sugar burner to a fat burner, normally occurs in 2-3 weeks (confirmed by measuring ketones with a blood ketone

meter), but I've had clients take as long as 2-3 months before they adapt and get results. However, there are some folks who never fully adapt, and others who do adapt yet disappointingly experience no weight loss or results.

If you're following the ketogenic diet and not seeing results, you must incorporate diet variation to "mix it up" and trigger a metabolic shift. The method has worked like magic for clients who were stuck in a state of weight-loss resistance. Here's an example of how it works: follow the ketogenic diet for a few months, then switch to a higher carb version of the True Cellular Detox™ Diet (up to 150 grams/day), still avoiding grains and sugars but including "safe" starches like berries, sweet potatoes, squash, plantains, etc. for a few months. Then, once again shift back into the keto diet and...BAM! Weight finally starts to shed. Overtime, weight-loss may plateau again; if this occurs, simply shift back to the True Cellular Detox™ Diet, and weight loss should resume. I've repeated this cyclical diet variation method with several cases seeing consistent, excellent results.

Boosting Weight-Loss with Another Type of Diet Variation (the 5:1:1 Rule)

Here's a special bonus tip. After plenty of self-experimentation, I created a tool to include along with diet variation to support breaking through the plateaus of weight-loss resistance. I call it the 5:1:1 Rule. Here's how to implement it: for 5 days of the week, consume a low-carbohydrate ketogenic diet (testing ketones to confirm you're in ketosis); 1 day per week do a full 24 hour water fast or intermittent water fast, consuming high quality fat (like raw coconut oil or grass-fed butter oil) throughout the day if needed for energy; and 1 day a week do a carbohydrate or protein "load day," in which you dramatically increase carbs or protein for diet variation and also to remind your body it is not starving. Depending on your health condition, a carbohydrate or protein load day may be preferable, and load days may also be altered weekly. The key is in the variation!

Why You Stop Losing Weight or Hold on to Fat In That One Area You Hate

It's always about survival. The body will hang on to that last 10-15 lbs, especially in that area we hate the most. It does this just in case it needs the energy for future emergencies like times of famine. When carbs intake is low for long enough the body gets fearful, and becomes very efficient at burning fat. I have found it slows the fat burning down in two ways. One, by plugging up the fat cells with water to slow down the burn. In this case, you get a weird, loose, cellulite type of fat right where you hate it the most. And two, by blunting the insulin receptors, which makes you store more fat and stop fat burning.

The 5-1-1 rule, or even just adding in a carb day a week, tells the body it has plenty and the fat is good to burn. This works like crazy and it makes staying on the diet so easy knowing this day is coming. My high carb day is always Saturday. I even eat breakfast on this day, which because I intermittent fast daily I never eat breakfast, so it's a great day. Well, sometimes... Caution: Don't go overboard or you will regret it. I know now that if I overdo it, I walk around full and tired all day. The good news? Two days afterwards (even after the days I overdo it) I am visibly leaner. It works.

Why You Need Stress to Be Healthy

Another example of the magic of variation for increased health is the principle of stress and rest as it applies to exercise. Consider our ancestors: one day they climbed a mountain to kill a wild beast, and the next day they feasted on the kill and

restored by celebrating the achievement. Stress and rest involves periods when the body is pushed to the physical limit (stress), followed by time for the system to recover (rest). Modern translation: if you're always doing the same routine at the gym or jogging route around the neighborhood, progress will halt as the body soon adapts to a predictable regime. Therefore... Mix. It. Up. Then take time to recover from training. The most efficient and effective exercise regime for rapid weight-loss includes intervals of intense workouts, followed by a day or two of rest when the body is given sufficient time to recover. Periods of proper rest are vital to peak performance, and promote both physical and mental fortification.

A perfect contemporary way to put the stress and rest principle into action is a type of workout called Burst Training (or High Interval Intensity Training). Burst training mixes bouts of high intensity, short duration exercise with periods of rest. For example, try sprinting for 30-60 seconds then resting for 60 seconds, and work up to doing this cycle for ten minutes. There's no need to spend hours pounding the pavement or at the gym. Try following this workout 3-4 times a week—that's only 40 minutes a week!—and you'll be shocked with the results it brings in short periods of time. Burst training is my favorite type of exercise for efficient fat burning, weight-loss, longevity, and even offers anti-aging effects because it helps to boost HGH production. It allows you to work out smarter, not harder, and makes the body very metabolically efficient. A win-win!

Variation: The Key to Your Healthiest Life

I believe this principle works so well because of our body's basic innate intelligence to survive. Healthy bodies thrive when forced to adapt both physically and mentally. The diet variation, just like exercise variation, works because the body will adapt by raising life saving hormones. Hormones, like human growth hormone, maintain valuable muscle the body may need in flight or fight and cause the fat it stored for energy to be burned and used. Whether it's single days of variation, like the high carb day in the 5-1-1, or months of a low carb diet and shifting to a healthy higher carb diet, it works because of what I call hormone manipulation. After all, weight loss and aging slower are more about hormones than how much we exercise or even the foods we eat.

Our ancestors followed the way of life for which our bodies were designed: a life of variation. They spent most time outdoors, in tune with nature and the seasons. They consumed fresh, seasonal, and indigenous foods, and if there was no food to eat, none was eaten and they fasted. Conversely, if food was in abundance, they feasted. They went on physically demanding quests, pushing their bodies to the limit, and then rested. Our ancestors were forced to live a life of unpredictable variety, and were healthier for it.

This is why variation in both diet and exercise work so well for supporting modern health challenges (like weight-loss resistance) and keeping our bodies in a peak state of health: it takes advantage of how we were built to function. If you're not seeing results with your current diet and exercise regimen, try shifting between ketosis and periods of higher healthy carb intake, experiment with intermittent fasting, and change it up at the gym. I believe one of the worst things we can do is stay on one diet or one exercise program. You'll not only become a more efficient fat burner, but it will positively affect your whole body and mind. And speaking of fat burning, I'll next let you in on the most significant thing I do each day to maintain a lean, healthy body...

See article on Intermittent Fasting in resources section.

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