



Eat Anything, Lose Weight

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Losing weight was always a struggle for me. It wasn't until recently that I discovered how easy it is to lose weight. I learned that dieting did not have to be restrictive. I learned that we can eat whatever we want **and** lose weight. I wrote this essay to share my experiences in the hopes that it saves you time and helps you avoid the frustration of navigating the confusing world of diets!

All of my life I could build muscle and put on size fairly easily. Eating wasn't a problem for me. Once, when bulking up, I even followed the infamous GOMAD diet. GOMAD is an acronym, it stands for "Gallon Of Milk A Day." **I would drink a gallon (4L) of whole milk every. single. day.**

I did this because I was willing to do whatever it took to put on weight and get stronger. I was committed. I was also committed when I decided to lose weight. It took a lot of discipline to follow a famous diet known as the Slow Carb Diet for 6 months. And even though my pants size dropped from a 36" to a 32", I couldn't stay on that diet simply because **it was too restrictive!**

Most popular diets restrict too many food groups. This makes them hard to stick to. These diets also usually label "carbs" the enemy. Contrary to this advice, it has been my experience that I can eat whatever I want, including carbs (pizza, donuts, chips) and **still lose weight.** *I don't have to restrict any food groups, I've just got to control the amount of those foods that I eat.*

I practice **unrestrictive dieting**. When I am trying to lose weight, **I eat whatever I want** as long as it is below my total daily energy expenditure (TDEE) (ie the amount of calories that I burn per day). This means that if I want ice cream, I have ice cream. If I

want pizza, I have pizza. I just keep track of my calories and stay below a certain number (my TDEE).

I know that this stuff can be confusing so I will explain a little bit more. Our bodies are like machines. And like machines, our bodies need fuel. We get our fuel from the foods that we consume. The energy that we get from these foods is measured in units known as calories.

Our bodies use a certain amount of calories just keeping us alive (think breathing, digesting, repairing cells, walking around). The number of calories that our body uses is known as our total daily energy expenditure or TDEE (when the calories used during exercise are accounted for).

So a 36 year old man who works out 3 times a week, is 5'11", and weighs 180lbs, has a TDEE of 2,536 calories. This means he needs to consume approximately 2,536 calories per day in order to maintain his weight. If this man wants to lose weight, he must eat less than 2,536 calories per day. Similarly, if this man wants to gain weight, he needs to consume more than 2,536 calories.

So what all of this means for you is that the first step to achieving your physique goals is learning how to track your calories. After successfully tracking your calories for a few weeks, you can begin to make some changes. I suggest against making drastic changes. Rather, make gradual changes, adding or removing calories little by little.

Crash dieting is likely to lead to "cheating" on your diet. The change is too drastic. The better approach would be to start by cutting 100 calories from your diet. Do that for a week or two. See how you feel, see if you lose weight. If you feel fine then try a bit of a bigger drop, perhaps 200 to 300 calories. Again, do it for a week. After the week, see how you feel. Are you losing weight? Are you grumpy? Are you happy? If you go to

the gym, are you gaining strength? Losing strength? Use the feedback from your body to guide you.

The same goes for gaining weight. You've got to eat more calories than you consume. This can be hard for a lot of people, especially younger athletes. Again, start small. **"Sneak" calories into your food. Extra bread, rice, potatoes. Drink shakes.** Weight gainer is not necessary but it can help. And it's pretty cool. But you can also make your own weight gainer shake quite easily. For example, the shake that I am currently consuming contains roughly 600 calories. It consists of 4 raw eggs, a cup of almond milk, 1 scoop of whey protein powder, 1 tablespoon of blackstrap molasses and 1 teaspoon of raw honey.

I could easily add 500 calories to this shake by simply adding a banana (200 calories), 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (190 calories), and a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dry instant oatmeal (100-150 calories). After these additions my shake would come in at over 1000 calories. Shakes are perhaps my favorite way to add some extra calories to my diet.

You can track your calories by using apps such as My Fitness Pal. There are also several calorie calculators online (spritistrength.io) that can help you determine your caloric needs. Remember to try a few different ones and to avoid making drastic changes to your diet.

Finally, I am going to leave you with some simple ways that you can begin to cut calories from your diet without weighing your food or adding up calories in your head.

- **Eliminate sugary drinks** such as pop/soda, juices, and milk. We often drink these drinks out of habit, not to quench our thirst. Water is our friend here. It is the best thirst-quencher known to us. And guess what? Its got 0 calories per serving!

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- **Stop snacking.** Stop snacking on chips, chocolate bars, candies, peanuts, trail mix, cereal, granola bars, etc. These foods are addictive, very easy to consume, and the calories add up extremely fast.
 - Aim to **eat whole meals** instead. Try to eat meals that contain consistent portions. A 4 oz. salmon fillet, with a half cup of white rice, and a half cup of spinach for example. Eating like this makes it easier to track your calories. This meal is also full of nutrition. You will get a lot more nutritionally from this meal than you would from a bag of chips and a can of coke, even though both of these meals probably contain a similar amount of calories!
 - **Skip breakfast.** A lot of people find that by skipping breakfast they are more focused throughout the day. They avoid the dreaded afternoon crash. And to their surprise, they actually don't feel hungry at all. We are conditioned by society to think that we need to consume breakfast. This is not necessarily true. Personally, it has been my experience that I perform best skipping breakfast. Experiment for yourself. Make your own decision. You be the judge.
 - Lastly, **walk.** Walking, especially with a brisk pace is a great way to burn extra calories. It is also great for your mental health. I love taking long walks. The longer I walk, the more my body warms up, I can feel it generating and using energy. Often times, I go out for a walk and immediately think to myself that it's freezing! However as I walk some more, usually within about 10 minutes or so, my body begins to warm up. This is energy being used, calories being burned.

Remember, I am not a dietician, I am simply sharing my experience of losing weight and telling you how I did it. Likewise for gaining weight. This is not medical advice. Please consult your physician before making any changes dietary changes. I wish you all the best Namaste!

Contact

Please note that I do provide in-person and online consultations as well. If you'd like some clarification or some help reaching your goals, feel free to contact me below to discuss pricing and packages.

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