

WEIGHT LOSS AND WELLNESS GAMEPLAN

By, Tara Ostrowe, MS, RD, New York Giants Team Nutritionist

Everyone has different reasons and motivations for changing their diet and losing weight. Taking the next step to changing one's diet can be perplexing since there are tons of messages and information out there regarding the correct diet that will give you the desirable results. For example, one diet book will say to cut out all carbs, another will tell you to keep carbs, but cut out all sugar. Meanwhile, another book, for example, will recommend that carbs are ok, but to cut out most fat.

This inconsistency of information can often lead to yo-yo dieting and always a desire to try something new to drop the extra pounds. In addition, losing weight during fall and winter can be extra challenging with the change in temperature, fall charity events and parties, and shorter days.

Given all the information out there that's sometimes conflicting, it is easy

to feel stressed about the right course to take to drop the pounds. Whether your goal is to lose weight for an upcoming event, for medical reasons, or for general wellness, your task will be made much easier if you're equipped with the right fundamentals. Rather than continuously jumping from different fad diets, instead, incorporate these nutrient-rich fundamentals for a diet and fitness game plan that will optimize your body's metabolism.

GAMEPLAN

• EAT WHOLE FOODS:

Choose the least processed forms of food such as fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds, lean meat, beans, and whole grains. Therefore snack on berries, apples, raw almonds, bell peppers, and carrots instead of chips, candy, and pastries. Choose nutrient rich quinoa, oatmeal, multigrain bread,





sweet potatoes, and brown rice over sugary cereal, white bread, and white rice. Whole foods will fuel your body with an assortment of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, keep your energy levels steady, and prevent spikes in blood sugar levels; all of which will run your metabolism extremely efficiently.

• **EAT LEAN:**

Choose lean protein such as chicken, turkey, fish, egg whites, and fat free dairy, instead high saturated fat or processed meats such as beef, pork chops, lamb, hot dogs, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, or fried chicken. The leaner meats have much fewer calories per ounce than the high fat meats, which mean you will be eating same amount of food, but it will cost you much few calories from your daily energy allowance. Limit fried, greasy, and creamy foods. For example, adding 2 Tbsp of ranch dressing can easily add an additional 400 calories to your salad. Make sure the higher fat foods you eat are rich in omega 3 fatty acids and monounsaturated fat such as walnuts, almonds, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, olives, canola oil, avocado, and salmon. You still need to watch your portion sizes, but those foods are vitamin rich and pro-

vide you with the nutrients to stave off hunger and decrease inflammation.

• **ADEQUATE PROTEIN INTAKE:**

Include a LEAN protein source throughout the day to keep energy levels up, to run metabolism properly, and to help muscle recovery. Make sure to consume the recommended amount of protein for you body and exercise regimen. The average range of protein that the general population needs are .8-1.5g/kg of body weight. Typically, an elite athlete will need a higher range of 1.4-1.8g/day.

• **EAT BREAKFAST EVERY DAY:**

Skipping out on breakfast will slow your metabolism! Make a plan to eat within 1 hour of waking up and drink 16oz of water first thing in the morning, to jump-start your metabolism. Make sure to keep quick breakfast items such as yogurt, oatmeal packets, and nutrition bars at home in case you need to eat breakfast on the go.

• **EAT OFTEN:**

Aim to eat every 2-4 hours for optimal metabolic speed. Look at each meal and snack as an opportunity to fuel your body favorably. Plan a head and carry healthy snacks with you so that you can meet this guideline.

• **HYDRATE PROPERLY:**

Meeting your individual water needs is needed to energize your body and run every system optimally. Aim for .5 to 1oz per pound of body weight. Carry a water bottle with you throughout the day to help you stay hydrated. Often times when people feel hungry, they are actually thirsty. Therefore meeting your hydration needs will not only run your metabolism more efficiently, but can help with appetite control.

• **PORTION SIZES, PORTION SIZES, PORTION SIZES:**

Now that you know the ideal type of foods to optimally run your metabolism, it is also imperative that you watch the portion sizes of those foods. Aim for your dining plate at a meal to be 1/4 to 1/3 of whole grains, 1/3 of lean protein, and 1/3 to 1/2 of veggies. Read food labels, and make sure to eat the correct serving size. It is imperative to have a structure and routine to your eating so that you can be consistent with the amount of food you eat at a given meal or snack anytime and anywhere.

• **DINING OUT, STILL COUNTS:**

Restaurant foods more times than not, have hidden calories, salt, and fats to add flavor, such as extra butter, oil, and sauce. Do your best at making healthy choices and watching your portion sizes when you dine at your favorite restaurants. Try to split entrees or take 1/2 home with you, remove the bread or chip basket, and skip the dessert. The small intricate pastry can easily add an additional 600 calories to the meals. It's not worth it! Ask for a plate of fruit. Ask your waiter questions about the preparation of the menu item that you

would like to order and ask to get the sauce on the side or a salad in place of healthier sides. Also, limit your alcohol intake; one margarita can pack on an additional 300 calories to your meal.

• **EXERCISE DAILY:**

Exercise and diet together leads to weight loss success. Have a fitness schedule and make exercising regularly a priority. For each day have a plan A and plan B exercise game plan and each night reassess your schedule and which plan to choose for the next day. Make sure to include both resistance and cardio exercise to your fitness routine. Both will help you lose weight and more importantly improve your body composition. However, resistance exercise builds lean body mass, which increases your metabolic rate and helps with long-term weight management.

• **BE MINDFUL! VIGILANCE LEADS TO WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS:**

Stay committed to this game plan. It is extremely important for you to be aware of the food and drinks you are consuming and the timing of your food intake. It is also quite helpful to monitor your daily exercise. To help you stay on track, either keep a food and activity journal the traditionally way with a pen and paper or use an online or phone nutrition and fitness application.

• **GET PLENTY OF SLEEP:**

Sleep plays an important role in metabolism and weight management. Sleep can impact appetite regulation, body composition, energy, muscle growth, and exercise recovery. Have a goal of getting 7-9 hours of sleep each night.