The Road to Health & Fitness

Discipline and knowledge are essential components to achieving optimal health. The key to any body transformation program is the fuel you give to your body to make it to and through the process. Just as you would never think of putting water in the gas tank of your automobile, you should not put cheap fuel into your body -even though It doesn't mean you can never eat a treat or something "less than ideal". When you have conditioned your body to optimal health and increased metabolism you have the opportunity to eat what you please, within reason without affecting your progress.

For now, let's cover the basic food types:

CARBOHYDRATES

Contrary to popular belief, Carbs are not the enemy. Carbohydrates are essential for energy, especially the energy needed for exercise and they also play a vital role in the body's ability to increase lean mass. For the purpose of this program we will define carbohydrates as two major types: Active and Free

ACTIVE CARBOHYDRATES

Also known as starchy, white and high glycemic carbs, these foods have a powerful effect on the hormonal and biochemical systems of the body hence the term "active". These carbs cause a rise in blood sugar and a resulting rise in insulin, the hormone responsible for getting sugar out of the blood and into the tissues, including muscles and fat. We consider these active because they have a direct influence on your energy, thought processes, cravings, emotions and body composition. These carbohydrates, as stated before, are not the enemy, nor should they be avoided -They just need to be regulated. Truthfully, these foods are very powerful and can be essential in helping you reach any fitness or body goal you may have when used correctly.

A partial list of active carbs has been provided below:

Barley, yams, oatmeal, red beans, tomatoes, black eyed peas, corn, sweet potatoes, long grain rice, potatoes, popcorn, lentils, pasta, peas

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An analogy I use with my clients when it comes to active carbohydrates involves a cup. Imagine that a cup is your ability to handle active carbohydrates. When that cup is half full, your body will utilize the energy from the carbs AND the energy from fat. As the cup approaches "fullness" the body is more inclined to use the energy from the active carbs and not the energy from fat. When you eat too many active carbs, "the cup runneth over" and that excess is stored as fat! On the opposite of the spectrum- when that cup is empty, your body has little energy to perform activities of daily living and exercise.

FREE CARBOHYDRATES

Also called fibrous, non-active and low-glycemic carbs. These are the carbohydrates that do not have the dramatic effect on blood sugar and insulin. Free carbs can be utilized whenever and as often as you need them. They are great fillers adding healthy bulk to your diet, they are full of fiber and oftentimes packed with vitamins. They provide a variety of tastes and textures that we need when following an eating program. Free carbs have been a lifesaver of a number of dieters and they should become a mainstay in your healthy lifestyle.

Partial list of Free Carbs below:

Zucchini, green beans, squash, broccoli, spinach, bell peppers, mushrooms, cauliflower, lettuce of all kinds, cucumbers, pickles, celery, hot peppers of all kinds

PROTEINS

Perhaps the most vital nutrient/food types there are, the word protein is derived from the Greek word meaning "of prime importance". Composed of building blocks called amino acids that combine to form a large number of different proteins. Proteins are essential and present in ALL cells of the body,needed for muscle contraction and movement and are vital in the formation of regulatory hormones. They tend to be filling, give your metabolism a boost and when consumed with carbs helps keep blood sugar swings in check. Protein also has the highest thermic effect of the foods, this means it takes more energy to digest proteins than it does carbs or fats. This may be one of the reasons for success in high protein low carb diets (we will get back to this).

Protein sources include:

Eggs, chicken, turkey, beef (lean cuts), fish, shrimp, crab, whey powder, tofu, cheese (all kinds)

FATS

Let's start with a few noteworthy functions of fat

1. Protection and insulation of vital organs and the central nervous system
2. Act as a carrier for fat soluble vitamins (D,E,A, K)
3. Are vital to body function on the cellular and full scale level, the central nervous system and the production of red blood cells, hormones and much more.
4. Essential in its function of controlling hunger pangs and giving the feeling of fullness.

FATS CAN BE CLASSIFIED INTO TWO MAIN GROUPS:

SATURATED AND UNSATURATED

Saturated Fats are typically more prominent in animal products like meat and dairy and are hard at room temperature. Moderate intake of this type is important as too much can be linked to elevated blood cholesterol and cardiac risk factors.

Unsaturated fats have been associated with improved cardiac profiles and can be found predominantly in uncooked nuts, seeds and plant sources.

Fat sources to include:

Raw nuts, avocado, avocado oil, olive oil, coconut oil, butter, ghee

EATING PLANS

The following is a review, with sample menus of my favorite eating plans. Using the principles discussed above and in no particular order or importance: The Isocaloric, the Keto run and the Carb cycle. The information presented is a bare minimum approach to give general understanding and to avoid boring you to death with too many particulars.

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Isocaloric Eating plan

This is the basic idea of eating a true "balanced" diet with the same caloric intake of macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates & fats) being split evenly in thirds. This can be your baseline eating plan and a great introduction to treating nutrition as a lifestyle and not a fad. This eating plan allows the most normalcy in people's lives and when executed properly doesn't really feel like a diet.

With this plan start with your caloric needs then take that number and multiply it by .33, this will determine your caloric needs per macronutrient. Divide the number by 4 to determine your protein and carbohydrates amounts in grams and divide by 9 to determine the number of fats in grams.

For Example: Using the daily caloric needs of 2360 calories per day

2360 X .33 = 778.8 of each macronutrient

778.8 / 4 = 195 grams of both protein and carbs

778.8 / 9 = 86 grams of fat

Our example would result in a plan allowing 195g of both protein and carbs with 86g of fat. Now all that is required is to pick the foods that meet these numbers (there are plenty of food chart's available online) preferably from the approved foods listed above.

Some potential pitfalls with this type of eating plan are:

1. Bad timing of carbohydrate consumption, it's best to eat carbs in the AM hours and in your post workout meal.
2. Getting too much of the bad trans-saturated fats or saturated fats. This can be avoided by eating lean protein, if you have trouble hitting total fat calories for day try adding olive oil or flax seeds to a salad.
3. Eating carbs at night, unless you workout in the evening for your post workout meal. Carbs should be consumed much earlier in the day.
4. The many food choices allowed in this plan can cause problems. Find some favorites and stick with them. Being a creature of habit is a good thing when it comes to proper nutrition.

Sample IsoCaloric Meal Plan:

Meal	Example	Supplements
Breakfast	2 egg whites + 2 whole eggs 1 cup of hot cereal (dry measure) or 1 slice Ezekiel Bread 1 piece of fruit or 1 cup berries	1 fish oil 1 black seed oil 1 multi-vitamin (sex specific)
Snack	1 oz raw almonds	
Lunch	4-6 oz lean protein 1 cup (cooked) long grain rice Large Salad + 1 cup sweet potato	1 fish oil pill 2000 mg Vitamin C
Snack	20-30 grams Protein shake	
Dinner *(No later than 7:30pm)*	3-4oz lean protein (sirloin, turkey, fish) 1-3 cups green veggies (steamed or sauteed in coconut oil)	1 black seed oil 1 fish oil 4 oz kombucha or 1 probiotic pill
Post Workout Meal	30g Protein Shake	2000 mg Vitamin C 1000 mg Magnesium

The Keto Run

This is one of the more powerful fat burning tools out there. Similar eating plans go by a number of names including; low carb diet, Adkins and Paleo. Ideally in this plan you get your body to switch from using carbs as a primary energy source to using ketones (by product of fatty acid metabolism) as a primary source of energy. I use the word "Run" because it should be used short term only for 7-14 days

and not as a prolonged dieting approach like the Isocaloric or Carb Cycling plans. The macronutrient breakdown for the keto run is 30% protein - 65% fat and Carbohydrates as low as you can go, but for calculation purposes 5%.

The Benefits of this eating plan is a ton of fat loss (when done correctly) and a lot less inflammation in the body, joints and internal organs.

The potential pitfalls are as follows:

1. Low energy. Because we are so used to using carbs as a main energy source when we switch over to a keto diet it takes 2-5 days for the body to deal with drops in blood sugar, but when the body switches over to fat metabolism an increase of energy ensues.
2. Decreased cognitive abilities. Some people report a bit of brain fog for a couple of days.
3. Loss of strength in the gym. Again a temporary side effect combined with low energy and brain fog these big 3 symptoms are known as "keto flu".
4. If you cheat while on the keto run (eat carbs), not only will it blow the strategy, but you will also gain fat from it. A good cheat cheat will kick you out of the fat burning stage and you will have to start over and relive pitfalls 1-3.
5. It takes a paradigm shift due to the amount of fat you end up eating. Just remember your body is using fat as fuel during this phase.

Using same calories of 2360 from previous example and the keto breakdown of 35% Protein, 60% fat and 5% carbs;

Protein: 2360 x .35 = 826 calories / 826 / 4 = 206 grams protein
Fat: 2360 x .60 = 1534 calories / 1534 / 9 = 170 grams of protein
Carbs: 2360 x .05 = 118 calories / 118 / 4 = 29 grams of carbs

Meal		Supplements
Breakfast	6 whole eggs 2 slices Bacon ½ avocado	1 fish oil 1 black seed oil 1 multi-vitamin (sex specific)
Snack	3 oz raw almonds	
Lunch	1 can tuna in water Large Salad + olive oil dressing	1 fish oil pill 2000 mg Vitamin C
Snack	20-30 grams Protein shake	
Dinner *(No later than 7:30pm)*	5oz Salmon or Chicken thighs 1-3 cups green veggies (steamed or sauteed in coconut oil)	1 black seed oil 1 fish oil 4 oz kombucha or 1 probiotic pill
Post Workout Meal	30g Protein Shake	2000 mg Vitamin C 1000 mg Magnesium 1 serving fiber supplement

Carb Cycling

Carb cycling is a series of mini keto runs (2-3 days) followed by an Isocaloric day, another mini keto run and then a High carb day. In other words it is a series of low carb depletes followed by replenishes. Carb cycling is good when you know you have an event, a special dinner upcoming or for some people a standard way of eating. The high carb day has a macronutrient breakdown of 25% protein, 10% fat and 65% Carbs.

Pitfalls:

1. Requires good planning, you have to be more meticulous with this one as it is essentially 3 styles of eating in 1 week.
2. By the end of your low carb days you may feel some of the symptoms of "keto flu".

Using the same 2360 calories with the High Carb breakdown of 25% protein, 10% fat and 65% carbs the math is as follows:

Protein: 2360 x .25 = 590 calories / 590 / 4 = 148g protein

Fat: 2360 x .10 = 236 calories / 236 / 9 = 26g fat

Carbs: 2360 x .65 = 1534 calories / 1534 / 4 = 384g carbs

Meal		Supplements
Breakfast	4 egg whites 1.5 cups (dry measured) oatmeal ½ cup raisins 1 piece fruit or 1 cup berries	1 multi-vitamin (sex specific)
snack	1 cup applesauce 10 dried apricots	
Lunch	6oz spaghetti sauce 4oz pasta 2 cups veggies or salad	
snack	2 pieces fruit your choice	
Dinner *(No later than 7:30pm)*	3-4oz lean protein (sirloin, turkey, fish) 1-3 cups green veggies (steamed or sauteed in coconut oil)	4 oz kombucha or 1 probiotic pill

Post Workout	20-30g protein shake	2000 mg Vitamin C 1000 mg Magnesium

An ideal schedule for carb cycling would be;

Mon/Tues- Low Carb (keto run)

Weds - Moderate carb (Isocaloric)

Th/Fr/Sat - Low carb

Sun- High Carb day

The understanding and utilization of these 3 diet plans is a powerful tool to transform your health. How you alternate between and the results will vary person to person but it is important to see how you will respond to each. Everyone is different, therefore everyone will respond differently but i feel confident that with this game plan failure is not an option!!!!