

Evolutis
SPORT & FITNESS

IMPROVE YOUR DIET

A GUIDE TO FAT LOSS



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INTRODUCTION

So you've joined Evolutis (best decision ever!) and a major part of your reasoning for this, I'm sure, is not only to improve your fitness levels but to also improve your body composition through, most likely in your mind weight loss, or more accurately and in our eyes fat loss.

Your fitness levels are taken care of by turning up to your Group Personal Training & Team Training sessions each week and by being as active as possible in your everyday life – and by this, I mean walking and moving as much as you can during the day.

In terms of improving your body composition and losing body fat, which these posts will focus on getting your diet right is key to your success. This series of posts will explain how to best do this, it will arm you with what I believe are the essentials and will get you results if followed.

I hope you enjoy the information I share and start to make some positive changes straight away. With that in mind, let's get started!

David Knowles

Head Coach/Trainer, Dad x 5, Wannabe Singer/Songwriter!

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PART 1 : ENERGY BALANCE

When attempting to change your body composition, such as aiming to gain muscle or reduce your body fat (which is what these posts will primarily focus on) - understanding what energy balance means and its importance when changing your body shape, is the best place to start.

So, what is meant by energy balance and why is it so important when aiming to lose or gain weight?

Essentially, energy balance is: Calories IN vs Calories OUT

- Put simply, if you consume MORE calories than the energy you expend you will GAIN weight.
- If you consume FEWER calories than the energy you expend, you will LOSE weight.
- If you consume the SAME number of calories as the energy you expend - you will MAINTAIN your weight.

Therefore WHAT you eat, WHEN you eat it and HOW you eat it, is secondary to CALORIES IN VS CALORIES OUT.

Is there something to back this up?

Yes - In 2010, there was a study conducted by Mark Haub, a Professor of Human Nutrition in the US. For a period of 10 weeks Mark ate Twinkies (an American sugary snack) every 3 hours throughout the day instead of meals.

Crucially during the study, Mark ate in a CALORIE DEFICIT and as a result, he lost weight (12kg), even though he was consuming mostly non-nutritious foods. His premise was to show that calorie counting/control is what matters most when looking to lose weight and not necessarily the nutritional value of the food itself.

This is not a cue to now rush out and buy your favourite treats and only eat these, it's more to highlight the overall importance of energy balance and calories in vs calories out.

On the flip side, now that you know this, you should be aware that it is entirely possible to eat the 'healthiest' diet the world has ever seen and still gain body fat if you eat in a CALORIE SURPLUS (consuming more calories than you expend).

This is why many of you come to me and say “my diet is pretty good” but aren't losing weight/dropping body fat! Make sense? Cool, I hope so.

In the next section I will talk about base metabolic rate (BMR) and how important it is to be aware of this if you want to drop body fat and change your body shape.

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PART 2 : BASAL METABOLIC RATE (BMR)

What is BMR? BMR is the total amount of calories/energy YOUR body needs in order to maintain its normal functions and processes such as; breathing, digesting food, your heart beating etc.

To explain this further, if you were to stay in bed for 24 hours solid and didn't move an inch, you'd still require a (surprisingly high) number of calories in that 24 hour period just to support all your basic bodily functions. Your BMR actually accounts for about 70% of your daily dietary intake!

There are a few different ways to work out your BMR - some are more complex/accurate than others, such as the Mifflin St Jeor or Harris-Benedict equation as these calculations take into account factors such as your age and height to give you your most accurate BMR number. If you search for the above calculators on the internet you can use them to work out your personal calorie requirements.

Ultimately though the various calculations that are available are all just numbers at the end of the day and none of them can we ever be sure are 100% accurate, but what they do, is give us something to work from, a starting point. So, if the results are still not coming after a while, say 6-8 weeks later, you would need to tweak your numbers up or down as necessary. However in the main, working out your BMR gives you a reference point that starts the process of understanding what is needed to help you get the results you want.

To calculate your BMR we are going to use the simple yet useful calculation below:

Your weight in KG x 22 (Male) or x 20 (Female)
For example: 75kg female X 20 = 1500 Calories

Next up, you need to multiply your BMR by your Physical Activity Level (PAL) taken from this list below:

- 1.2 Inactive (Little if any movement or activity)
- 1.4 Lightly Active (Exercise 1-3 days a week. Mostly seated during the day)
- 1.6 Moderately Active (Exercise 3-5 days a week. Mix of seated & standing/walking during the day)
- 1.8 Very Active (Hard exercise 3-5 days a week and on feet most of the day)
- 2.0 Extremely Active (Very hard exercise, training twice a day and on feet most of day)

Be honest when determining how active you are on a daily basis and choosing your PAL level.

If weight loss is your main goal, it's better to underestimate than overestimate here.

PART 3 : TOTAL DAILY ENERGY EXPENDITURE (TDEE)

Calculating your BMR and multiplying this by your PAL, means you have arrived at your TDEE requirement.

TDEE is the TOTAL amount of calories needed to provide your body with the required amount of energy to function on a day-to-day basis, based on your individual numbers and activity levels.

Therefore, put simply, in most cases, when we are carrying excess fat on our bodies, this is because we have previously, or are currently exceeding the total energy requirements of the body and not because of individual food sources such as fat or carbs - which are often demonised and used as reasons for why someone might have excess fat stored on their bodies.

IT SIMPLY BOILS DOWN TO EATING MORE CALORIES THAN YOUR BODY REQUIRES

The good news is, armed with the above knowledge, you can now look to regain control and make real progress. Let's quickly return to our 75kg person with a BMR of 1500. Let's say they are lightly active (and therefore 1.4 on the PAL scale). Their next calculation will be as follows:

$$1.4 \times 1500 = 2100 \text{ Calories}$$

We now know that for this moderately active female weighing 75kg, her daily MAINTENANCE calorie allowance is an estimated 2100 calories per day. However, if her goal is to reduce body fat, this is where she absolutely MUST enter a calorie deficit over a sustained period of time in order to be able to achieve her personal goal.

An example of this would be:

$$\text{Maintenance calories } 2100\text{kcal} - 500\text{kcal} = 1600\text{kcal}$$

Therefore, if this person starts to be mindful of their daily calorie intake and creates a 500kcal deficit per day, a nice, steady and sustainable fat loss will be achieved! If you haven't already done so yet, get your calculator out and crunch your numbers now!

One quick thing to note here as well is that your BMR will be higher the more you weigh, so as you start to lose weight, you'll need to recalculate your numbers – do this every 4 weeks or so, but only if your scale weight changes. For example:

- Week 1 – scale weight is 75kg, therefore BMR is $20 \times 75\text{kg} = 1500\text{kcal}$
- Week 8 – scale weight is 68kg and BMR is now $20 \times 68\text{kg} = 1360\text{kcal}$

(A difference of 140kcal!)

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This is quite significant and important to be aware of as that 140kcal difference could impact on you reaching your goal.

Let's just go through this one more time before moving on:

- Goal: Lower body fat %
- Current weight: 75kg
- BMR: $75\text{kg} \times 20 = 1500\text{kcal}$
- Activity level: Moderately active (1.4)
- Maintenance calorie intake: $1.4 \times 1500 = 2100\text{kcal}$
- Weight loss calorie intake: $2100\text{kcal} - 500 = 1600$

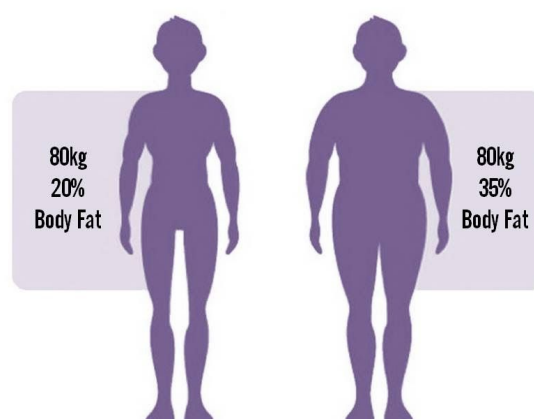
To steadily and sensibly lose weight this person will track their daily calorie intake to ensure they stay around 1600kcal per day and recalculate their numbers every 4 weeks or so as they lose weight.

Once they have weighed/assessed themselves at each 4 week period and subsequently recalculated the above numbers (to ensure a steady weight loss is continued), they will continue this process UNTIL they have reached their desired goal. They will then be able to settle at this particular calorie intake as their maintenance calorie amount.

So now that is all covered, next up we need to put this into some sort of a context that can be applied in your day-to-day life. This will be covered in the next section!

THINK **FAT LOSS**

NOT WEIGHT LOSS



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PART 4 : PLANNING, TRACKING & MEAL FREQUENCY

The science has been explained and hopefully you already have a pen and some paper where you've scribbled down your calculations, arriving at a figure that you can start to work with. Next, you need to be able to put this all into practice and in a way that doesn't leave you becoming too overly focused on calories and maths etc. This is where we should start to become more conscious of our eating and start to plan better.

Straight off the bat, my first bit of advice is to think about how often you eat per day. Are you currently twice a day, three times a day or four times a day eater? Maybe you eat more times, maybe less? None of these meal frequencies are right or wrong, but if we go back to our 75kg person who is focusing on 1600kcal a day to lose weight, it's often useful to then split the total amount of your daily calorie allowance up into per meal amounts.

For instance, let's go for a classic 3 meals a day set up: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Meaning 1600kcal divided by 3 = 533 kcals per meal

We know how many calories to eat per day to enter a fat loss state (provided this is our goal) and we now have an outline of how often we will eat and a framework for how many calories to eat per meal.

Okay, so how do you know for sure how many calories are in each meal?

Good question.

Here are some methods you can try:

1. You can simply count the calories by reading the food packaging labels and make a mental or actual notes of the total calories per food item that you are about to consume to stay on track with your personal calorie allowance.
2. If and when making foods from scratch, you can weigh your food ingredients. This is a very accurate method, but the most time-consuming also.
3. You can roughly estimate the calories in what you are about to eat. Only do this if you have a decent knowledge of the calories in the food you are eating, as it is easy to over/under-estimate here.
4. Use food tracking apps such as myfitnesspal. Once you've had some practice and got your head around how to use this app, it really is a good way of keeping track of your calorie intake as you simply scan the barcode of the food/ingredients you are about to eat and the app does the rest of the work for you.

Ultimately the approach you adopt should be the one that works best for you and is something that you are most likely to stick to. Once you are in the groove with knowing how many calories you should be consuming per day and how to track your intake most accurately, you now just need to start applying it.

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Don't wait, start now!

Be aware that nothing will happen overnight, my best advice is to weigh yourself, take measurements at certain sites of the body and/or take pictures of yourself in your underwear and then re-take these measurements/photos once every 2-4 weeks.

If by this point you still have not reduced your weight/body fat %, you may need to lower your daily/weekly calorie intake a little, or it may be you need to track your intake more accurately and not omit any of those snacks eaten on the go, those little nibbles here and there during cooking or the calories from drinks etc. as this can all add up and can be the difference between success or failure if not accounted for. Do also be mindful to not only focus on scale weight as this can sometimes be misleading due to a variety of factors.

For example: Your body can store between 400-800g of carbohydrate in the muscles and for every gram of carbohydrate that is stored in the muscles 2-4g of water is also stored. The more we exercise, the greater our capacity to store carbohydrates. This means our scale weight can go up or stay the same, but this is not necessarily due to increased/decreased fat stores but rather increased/decreased carbohydrate/water storage.

So to summarise, scale weight is not always a truly accurate indicator of progress, which is why I suggest assessing more-so things like how clothes are fitting and/or full body photos of yourself to see your changes visually and track your progress better.

Eating to fullness

What this doesn't mean go overboard and eat so much that you feel completely stuffed and end up going way over your daily calorie allowance and slowing your progress. Eating to fullness is less about the amount of food and more about making the right food choices that nourish you and leave you feeling satisfied and full after every meal.

There's not much worse than eating a meal and still feeling hungry – this is often what leads to overeating as you feel cheated, hungry and left day-dreaming of eating luxurious high-calorie foods! So, eat to satiate you! A limp salad for breakfast, lunch and dinner is bland and tasteless. You'll feel grouchy, grumpy and obsessed by food. Eat foods that fill you up and don't leave you wanting more! A good way of doing this is to include protein at every meal. Protein is an essential macronutrient which is used for growth and repair. It's also very filling and can leave you satiated for many, many hours (3-4 usually).

So, if you are going to have a salad, which is a nice nutritious meal, make sure there is adequate protein included as well to keep you the fullest for the longest and away from the snack cupboard! To explain further the benefits of including protein at every meal (and go a bit sciency this time), there are 2 main hormones that regulate our hunger. The first one is GHRELIN and the second is LEPTIN. Ghrelin is a hunger signalling hormone and sends messages to your brain to tell if you are hungry and require food.

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Leptin on the other hand tells your brain that you are full (technically reporting back that you have enough fat stores) and that you can stop eating/eat less. So, the aim here then is keep LEPTIN secretion levels high for as long as possible and GHRELIN secretion levels low for as long as possible. And a good way of doing this is by eating good amounts of protein. Protein has been shown to be a good appetite suppressor amongst other things.

So, whether your goal is to reduce body fat, or gain muscle, it appears that higher protein intakes can help. In terms of how much protein, well there are a lot of debates about how much protein to eat daily and that higher intakes can cause damage to the kidneys - this though has been shown to be untrue. In healthy people, normal protein intake poses little to no health risks.

- Lowest intake: 0.8g - 1.2g per kg of bodyweight
- Moderate intake: 1.2g - 1.8g per kg of bodyweight
- Higher intakes: 1.8g - 2.5g per kg of bodyweight

Therefore some guidelines for daily protein intakes are as follows:

Knowing your protein intake levels enables you to now split your daily intake up over the course of the day and in turn keep you nice and full.

For example: Using our 75kg female again, who is targeting fat loss as her main goal, she is opting for a moderate intake of protein and will need to do the following calculation:

$$1.4g \times 75kg = 105g \text{ of protein per day } 105g / 3 \text{ meals per day} = 35g \text{ per meal}$$

Once again, crunch these numbers yourself, come up with your personalised figures and start implementing this and see how you get on!

In the next section, we will pull everything together and we will cover preparation!

PART 5 : PREPARATION

Put simply, this is all about thinking ahead! What have you got on the next day? What's for your breakfast, lunch & dinner? Is any of this planned and thought about, or are you just waking up and going with the flow?

Instead of just going with the flow, guessing, my advice is for you to take control. Give yourself half an hour one or two days a week and plot out your meals for the next few days or the week ahead.

Again, using the 3 meals a day approach, plan your breakfast, lunch and dinner in advance. Either do this individually, or as a family and start analysing where you can make some positive changes.

For example:

Breakfast

If by routine you get up in the morning (rushed) and only have time to eat a bowl of cereal at 7am and then by 9am, as you arrive at work, you are hungry again - which then leads to a cup of tea and biscuit(s), change this.

Try a new breakfast such as eggs (protein) on wholemeal toast and see if that keeps you going further than 9am. I know mornings can often be hectic and rushed, but by planning ahead and waking up just a ½ hour earlier to have a breakfast that fills you up, will be well worth that extra ½ hour in the long-run, I promise!

Lunch

Make your lunch the night before, cook extra of your evening meal and put some aside for the next day, or at least buy your lunch before you reach the point when your stomach is rumbling, and you need food and food NOW! The hungrier you are the poorer your food choices are likely to be and this again increases your chances of overeating.

Dinner

Make your dinners interesting, enjoyable and satiating. Have dinners that really fill you up whilst keeping you within your calorie allowance. The knock-on effect of eating a good protein-rich breakfast and lunch is that by dinner time you're not completely ravenous and consequently making high-calorie meals, or ordering takeaways. Also by cooking a nice filling, protein-rich dinner that hits your calorie targets for the day you'll have taken a positive step towards achieving your goals. And not only that but you'll also have had good energy levels, felt fuller and happier all day long too. A much nicer process than what you might have experienced before when attempting to reduce weight/body fat.

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Overeating

Don't allow the stressors of the day to get on top of you and result in a food (or alcohol!) binge. Yes relax, have fun and enjoy yourself, just try not to get to that point in the day where you've had enough and your solution is to have some wine, beer or chocolate etc - associate these foods with socialising and good times, not to mask the stresses of your day.

When the urge to grab a drink or a treat comes, try the approach where you just put the brakes on for a minute and give yourself a 15/20 minute delay. Sometimes this delaying tactic really can make all the difference and even more so if you make yourself busy and take your focus away completely from the snacks. And don't worry, you will survive and still wake up in the morning alive and kicking, even without those extra 300/400+ (unneeded) calories.

I will stress though that it is perfectly fine to have these foods in your diet provided you are able to work them into your daily calorie allowance. My point here is about recognising why you want these foods and seeing if you can resist them if you don't need them.



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SUMMARY

For me the take home message from this sequence of posts is that you absolutely can lose body fat if you chose to.

There are some (rare) medical conditions such as low thyroid function that can affect success, but in the main, losing body fat is possible for you, even though at times in the past you may have felt it wasn't.

The process will require some focus, it won't happen overnight, but it can and will happen. Stay consistent and don't be too hard on yourself. If you lose focus now and again - you know the rules now, you'll just need to reset and go again.

Believe in the process, understand that there might be a few sacrifices here and there, a few adjustments to your normal habits and ways, but ultimately you absolutely can improve on where you are, no fads, no gimmicks, just a better understanding of the rules.

Most importantly I would like to encourage you to be patient, look after yourself, take a positive approach and don't give up! Don't be that person anymore that thinks they can't do it - take action and in the next 3/6/9/12, how ever many months it takes, be able to, at some point, stand there and say 'I bleeding did it!!' 😊

I hope you have found this information helpful and useful in some way. If you've any questions (on nutrition) or need any help (with nutrition), don't be afraid to get in touch!

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