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How To Do A Calorie-Conscious Low Carb Diet

By Jim Stone

Necessary Disclaimer (You Must Read This!)

I am not a medical doctor, and I don't pretend to be. Nothing in this booklet should be taken to be professional medical advice.

You must agree to hold me blameless for anything that results from the advice in this book that you choose to follow.

If you cannot agree to this, please stop reading right now.

Feel Free To Pass This Booklet Along

Although I had planned to sell this booklet, I figured it was time for this concept - the concept of a calorie-conscious low carb diet -- to reach as many people as possible. This is an idea whose time has finally come.

Calorie consciousness is not mentioned by most of the low carb "gurus". Yet the idea might well be the piece of the puzzle that will one day save their reputations. Many, if not most, low carb dieters will eventually stall on the not-quite-complete low carb diet plans being offered by these gurus. And these people will wonder how to break these stalls without giving up their low carb diets. Counting calories will be a big part of the answer.

Please feel free to give this booklet to your friends. If you run a website, please, feel free to give it away to your visitors. If you sell any low carb books or other products, please, feel free to give it away as a free bonus to your customers.

Table Of Contents

Necessary Disclaimer (You Must Read This!)	2
Feel Free To Pass This Booklet Along	3
Introduction -- Why You Might Want To Consider Doing A Calorie-Conscious Low Carb Diet	5
Step 1: Make Your Personal Food List	9
Step 2: Figure out how many calories your body needs in a day	13
Step 3: Construct a Personal Meal List	16
Step 4: Plan your first day, and stick to it.	21
Step 5: Plan a whole week -- then transcribe your plan into a grocery list.	23
Various Tips	26
Two Great Resources For further Study	30

Introduction -- Why You Might Want To Consider Doing A Calorie-Conscious Low Carb Diet

All right, so you're probably wondering what this "calorie-conscious" low carb stuff is all about. It's a hideous sounding combination of dieting ideas to some people, and you might just be looking for an excuse to toss this idea on the trash heap of bad ideas. But hear me out, please, before you do that ☺

Here's something you probably know...

Most low carb dieters follow a form of the low carb diet that says nothing about counting calories. In fact many low carb diets promise that you won't have to count calories at all if you follow their plan.

The Atkins diet is a prominent example.

Now Dr. Atkins has been unfairly accused of claiming that low carb dieters can eat as much as they want and still lose weight. The truth is, he doesn't actually say that.

But Dr. Atkins also doesn't see calories as the key to fat loss. The key to fat loss, according to Atkins, is in making sure you get the right number of grams of carbohydrates each day. The plan says that you should simply get your carb count fine-tuned, and you will probably lose or maintain weight according to your goals.

And the thing is, this works very well for a while. Most people who start the Atkins diet lose 5-10 pounds the first two weeks, and then, if they stick to the plan, go on to lose a bunch more weight.

For some people the protocol works perfectly. They reach their goal weight, go on maintenance, and maintain their weight the rest of their lives.

But for many, probably a majority, it doesn't work quite so perfectly.

SIDE NOTE

If you are just starting a low carb diet, and are having success,... or, if you are among the fortunate low carb dieters who are still losing weight without watching calories,... or, if you have maintained your goal weight for a significant stretch of time

without counting calories, ... I am, of course, not suggesting that YOU start counting calories.

That would just be sadistic.

But keep this book around just in case things turn against you. I'm not predicting it. I'm not wishing for it. Some people don't have to count calories, and I hope you are one of them.

But just in case...

Many people who start a low carb diet lose weight for a while and then stall for a considerable period of time -- well short of their goal. This discourages them, and often they start eating carbs again and put much of their weight back on again.

And some find that, if they have high levels of stress in their lives, they can put weight back on, even while sticking to their low carb diet, even with a carb count under 20 grams a day.

Now I think these people who yo-yo a bit on a low carb diet still come out ahead in the long run. Low carb nutrition is helpful for a number of reasons, not just weight loss, but it sure can be discouraging when you gain much of your weight back again.

Calories Count

Let me remind you of a fact you once knew:

Calories count.

If you burn more calories than your body absorbs, you will lose weight. If you get it vice versa'd, you'll gain weight. It's simple thermodynamics.

Now, you'll notice that I said if you burn more than "your body absorbs", not "more than you eat". That makes my statement kind of trivially true. But there's a reason I put it that way. Sometimes there are foods our body does not absorb for some reason. We eat the calories, but they pass right through.

And we must burn more calories when processing some foods than when processing others. So a calorie eaten is not a calorie absorbed. And we burn

calories in more ways than you think. So don't take my statement to be overly simple.

(And there is also the issue of metabolisms slowing down and speeding up. Though people like Dr. Gregory Ellis think that this is rarely a factor for most people in normal circumstances, and I think he makes a pretty good case for this in his book. Before suspecting a slow metabolism, overweight individuals should make sure they are not underreporting their caloric intake. In most normal cases the reason people aren't losing weight, in spite of reporting low calorie consumption, is that they are underreporting their caloric intake, and not that their metabolisms have slowed down.)

I'm not saying you can completely work the calorie equation simply by looking at food labels and your exercise program. There are some other factors affecting the calorie equation that aren't captured by these factors. But actually, once you know your base metabolic rate, food labels and exercise logs will get you very close to the truth.

If you make sure you burn more calories than you absorb, you will lose weight.

Some *Low Fat* dieters, poor creatures that they are, can, and do, lose weight by counting calories-- that is, they lose weight as long as they stick to their plan.

And the reason *Low Carb* diets work, regardless of what you might have thought, is because they help dieters get a negative calorie balance.

There is some debate about how much of the initial calorie imbalance that comes from low carb dieting is due to decreased consumption, and how much is due to increased caloric burn due to the different thermal properties of the foods being eaten, but the diet works, for as long as it works, because of its effects on the calorie balance.

However, if you eat low carb and manage to absorb more calories than you burn, you will gain weight, even if you stick to your diet perfectly.

When I present my book, [Stop Cheating On Your Low Carb Diet](#), to low carb dieters, I never promise that they will lose weight. I can't promise that without giving them a diet plan, which is not the point of that book. What I do guarantee is that I can help them stick to their diet. But if their diet plan allows them to absorb more calories than they burn, and they do absorb more calories than they burn, they won't lose weight -- even while sticking to their diet.

Unfortunately, some low carb dieters, especially those who have yo-yoed for a while, can actually gain weight on a low carb diet. I myself stopped losing weight at a certain point, because I could eat low carb and absorb as many calories as I burned.

When I stalled for many months, it was discouraging. But I found, as distasteful as it might be, that the answer was in counting calories.

So, If You Have To Count Calories, Why Eat Low Carb?

Some of you turned to a low carb diet, precisely because you were tired of counting calories on a low fat plan that you couldn't stick to. If this is you, you might be understandably alarmed at this advice.

You might say,

"I gave up all that pasta and all those sweets. It was worth it, because I didn't have to count calories, and could still lose weight.

But the low carb weight loss seems to have stopped. And you're telling me I should go back to counting calories.

If counting calories is the cure, I'd at least like to go back to eating my pasta and sweets. **But you're telling me I have to stay away from my favorite foods AND count calories!"**

Wow, when you put it that way, it sounds awful. I feel like a monster. I really do. And, the thing is, this is exactly what I'm saying.

But I have reason to believe that sticking to a calorie-conscious *low carb* diet will be easier than sticking to a calorie-conscious *low-fat* diet. And I also think low carb nutrition is superior to the alternatives for a number of other reasons, having nothing to do with weight loss.

So I am a monster, yes, but I am a monster who feels justified ☺

OK, so, if you're with me so far, and are starting to consider the possibility that you will want to do a calorie-conscious version of the low carb diet (either now,

or sometime in the future), let's go on to consider how to do a calorie-conscious version of the low carb diet.

It starts with a personal food list.

Step One: Make Your Personal Food List

Protecting Against That Fuzzy, Frenzied Feeling

When people strive to control their portions and restrict their food choices, they often confront problems.

One problem is that, while the task of figuring out what to eat, and how much to eat, is not terribly complicated, it is just difficult enough to produce agitation when one is hungry.

That's why it's essential to plan ahead and know what foods you will be eating, and what portions you will be having, well before the last minute.

Many calorie-conscious dieters leave food choices to the last minute, and sometimes they find themselves in a precarious position. They are out of the house, and want to stop at a fast food restaurant, but they don't know how many calories are in the food they want. Or they run out of familiar foods at home -- foods for which they know the calorie counts -- and they have to use foods they are unfamiliar with. Or they are out with friends, and are offered food they are unfamiliar with.

It seems easy enough to stop for a minute to make a fairly good educated guess about how many calories are in each food, and to make your choices and be on your way. You can figure out the calories more exactly when you get near an internet connection or another reference source again, and you can adjust your later meals if you were off by a bit.

Sure, it seems easy. But when you're hungry, and when you've been depriving yourself of calories for a while, **your thinking can get a little fuzzy and frenzied all at the same time.**

I've heard the fuzzy-frenzied feeling described many ways. I heard my favorite description a couple of months ago. A friend asked me,

"You know that stuff inside a pumpkin that holds the seeds in there -- that stringy stuff? Imagine a whole room full of that stringy orange pumpkin stuff strung from ceiling to floor, and very dense. And then imagine there are things you have to find in the room. Finding my thoughts right now is

like clawing my way around frantically in a room full of stringy orange pumpkin stuff."

And what happens when finding your thoughts *about what to eat* is like clawing around frantically in a room full of stringy orange pumpkin stuff?

In short, your cravings lodge appeals and lead you to rationalize. You say things like, "Well, it's not my fault I'm in this situation." Or, "I'll just eat what I want right now, and get back to the diet after that." Or, "It won't hurt too much, and it will make a nice treat." Or, "I'll get more serious tomorrow, and get more food I'm familiar with." Or, "I'm still a little hungry. Maybe that wasn't 400 calories. Maybe I should have another one." And on and on.

And what is the result? Well, you might stuff your face with a whole bunch of calorie dense food, and conveniently leave the event unrecorded, writing it off in your mind as an aberration. Unfortunately, if you do this very often, it can keep you from losing weight on your diet, and you'll look at your calorie journal, and you'll be truly puzzled, because everything you recorded looks just fine.

In my book, [*Stop Cheating On Your Low Carb Diet!*](#), I explain the psychology behind episodes like this, but you should see the importance of planning ahead, even if the psychology remains a little mysterious.

A "Personal Food List" Can Help

I would start by just writing down what you eat for 3-4 days. Do the low carb diet the typical way -- without watching portions or calories, and just eat what you want to eat within the low carb guidelines (basically just avoid sugar and starch).

Then take an hour with an internet connection some night after the kids have gone to bed, and sit down and calculate the calorie content for each item you ate on those 3-4 days (more on how to do that in a minute).

This will do two things.

First, it will help you develop a realistic sense of how many calories you are actually consuming.

Second, it will get you started building your own personal food list.

"My own personal what?"

Your own personal food list.

It's nice to have databases and books that tell you the calorie content of various foods or combinations of foods. In fact these tools are essential for researching the calorie content of the foods on your personal food list.

But you won't feel comfortable doing a calorie-conscious version of the low carb diet, until you have a set of foods you are intimately familiar with -- foods you can grab in the right amounts almost without thinking.

And that's what your personal food list is. It's the set of foods you are intimately familiar with. The foods you like to eat, and eat on a regular basis. You will eventually get to know the calorie content of these foods by memory, and you will be able to judge portions by sight.

Your personal food list should include not only foods you buy at the supermarket and keep in your refrigerator, but also foods you might want to eat while you're out.

I'll admit something scandalous to you. The first food I put on my list was Jack in the Box's Extreme Sausage Sandwich (550 calories without the bun). It's not the ideal food, primarily due to nitrates in the meat, and damaged fats in the cheese, but it's very convenient for me, and I know I will want something convenient oftentimes in the morning. (The nice thing about the extreme sausage sandwich is that they are supposed to put the cheese between the two sausage patties, with the egg. That way it doesn't stick to the bread that gets thrown out. Once every blue moon, they mess this up, but it's not very often).

A good goal is to get a list of 20 foods that you like to eat, and that are convenient to prepare. And *only then* start the calorie-conscious stage of your diet.

Here is the list I started with before I began watching portions:

Portion	Item	Calories
1	Extreme Sausage Sandwich sans bun	550
1	Egg	80
1 ounce	Part Skim Mozzarella	72
1 ounce	Steak (depending on leanness)	60-70
1 ounce	Turkeyburger	50
1 TBSP	Bullseye barbecue sauce	20

1	Jumbo Jack sans bun	400
1 ounce	Half and half	39
1/4 cup	Ricotta	100
	Lettuce and other salad veggies	negligible
1 nut	Macadamia nuts	18

You will notice that I have included only the food item, the portion size, and the calories on my list.

You can feel free to include the grams of fat, protein, and carbohydrates, if you wish, but I have not. I'm not a big fan of ferreting out all the little traces of hidden carbs. I don't think that makes a whole lot of difference when you are watching calories. If you've done a low carb diet for at least a month, you've got a pretty good idea about which foods are the good choices, and which ones are not.

My carb count will fall somewhere between 20 to 100 grams in a day, and I find it tedious to try to make sure it's the same amount every day--especially if I'm watching calories, too. And I've found that the **appetite-controlling aspect of low carb dieting** will work whether I consume 20 grams or 100 grams of carbs in a day, as long as I don't consume more than about 15 grams of carbs at any one meal (about a medium-sized piece of fruit).

You will also notice that I suggested that you have about 20 items before you start, and I had only 10. Well that's because I'm a little weird. I don't like to have a lot of variety when I first start a new diet plan. I like to get comfortable eating basically the same meals for several days in a row, so I don't have to think about it. I don't worry about nutrient deficiencies, since I take a good multivitamin religiously. But eventually I gradually add in new items as I come across them. (I do need some variety at some point.).

If you are like me, go ahead and start with just a few food items that you will eat over and over again your first week. If you are more typical, get about 20 items on your list before you start.

How do you figure out the calories?

Now, once you have a list of foods, you need to figure out the calorie counts for each food. I usually try to get the calorie count for a **small unit**, like an ounce of cheese or meat, or a quarter cup of cottage cheese or ricotta. The smaller portions give me **flexibility**.

To find the calorie count of almost any food, all you have to do is fire up Google or another search engine. Just type "foodname, calories" (e.g., "steak, calories") into the search field, and press search. Usually, within the first few listings, you will find the information you're after.

It amazes me more and more when I remember that, once upon a time, people actually got along without the internet. How did they -- er, I mean *we* -- do it?

Step 2: Figure out how many calories your body needs in a day

What you want to do -- before you start doing a calorie-conscious version of your low carb diet -- is plan your first day all out. But before you do that, you have to know how many calories your first day should contain.

Now when I started the calorie conscious phase of my diet, I weighed about 220. I was down from 243, but I had stalled. 220 isn't a terrible weight for me. I'm very comfortable with myself at that weight, but my goal was 210, so I decided to become calorie conscious to get those last pounds off.

My stall wasn't because I wasn't sticking to my diet. I had learned long before how to "stop cheating on my low carb diet" ☺ It was simply that I was consuming as many calories as I was burning, even while following my low carb diet completely.

Given the weight I was at the time, and my sex, age, height, and a complicated formula, I was able to determine that, if I did nothing but lay around all day, I would burn about 2200 calories a day. Let's call these my "just staying alive calories".

And to figure out how many calories I would burn on days when I didn't just lay around all day (I never lay around ALL day, regardless of what my wife might have told you ☺), I should add my activity calories on top of my just staying alive calories.

I made an educated guess that my activity calories would probably amount to 400 calories a day on average. And that also sounded like a good deficit to work with. If I could lose 400 calories worth of fat a day, that would be a little less than a pound a week. (Since that time I bought a neat little device called "caltrak", and this measured my activity calories much more precisely than my educated guess. It turns out I was underestimating my activity calories by about 100 per day, which was a pleasant surprise.)

I figured I burned about 2600 calories in a typical day. And I decided to set my caloric intake at 2250.

Actually, the extra 50 calories was partly a matter of convenience. It would allow me to start each morning of the first week with an extreme sausage sandwich without the bun for 550 calories, have 100 calories worth of half and half in my

typical 3 cups of coffee, and leave 4 more meals at 400 calories each for the rest of the day.

Now I was able to figure out my calorie needs pretty precisely, because I was familiar with Gregory Ellis's writings. Dr. Ellis is the author of [Ultimate Diet Secrets](#). He gives a very precise, but somewhat complicated formula for your resting calorie expenditure in his book.

Though I highly recommend checking out Dr. Ellis's book (I'll say a little more about it at the end of this booklet), it's not absolutely necessary to figure things out that precisely. Instead you can just pick a calorie count that you think might work for you. Then see how you do after a couple of weeks. If you lost a couple of pounds, you're probably on the right track. If you don't lose any weight (and you were hoping to), then you can set your calorie count a couple hundred calories lower, or, perhaps even better, keep your calories the same and add a couple hundred calories of activity to your day.

Step Three: Construct a Personal Meal List

Now that you have a personal food list started, with calories figured out for small units, and you know how many calories you want to consume in a day, you are ready to begin planning meals.

I like to have most of my meals be the same size throughout the day. It's just easier to plan meals if you don't have to do very much math. I like 400 calorie meals. You might like meals of different sizes.

Regardless, you should take your calorie count and break it up into different meals. For example, I divided my 2250 calories like this:

550 calories -- breakfast (around 9:00. I know, it's nice ☺)
100 calories -- half and half (in 3 cups of coffee)
400 calories -- lunch (about 12:00)
400 calories -- mid afternoon meal (about 3:00)
400 calories -- dinner (about 6:00)
400 calories -- mid evening meal (about 9:00)

Now, don't worry. I'm not really that fastidious about having my meals exactly every three hours. Some days I follow this schedule pretty closely. It's nice if you can do that. It keeps your energy pretty level throughout the day.

But sometimes I will be out and not get around to my dinner meal, and then eat two meals at 9:pm, and things like that. Life happens, and actually, this plan allows me to be quite flexible, in spite of the rigid calorie counting.

Basically, after breakfast, I get four 400-calorie allotments of food, and it doesn't matter too much to me when those happen.

You will want to make up your own typical daily meal plan.

Once you've decided on the size of your typical meal (again, for me, that is 400 calories), you will want to put together meals from your personal food list to get your personal meal list.

"My what?"

Your personal meal list.

"Wait, I already have a personal *food* list."

Yes, and we're going to use your personal *food* list to build your personal *meal* list.

Sometimes my meals are very simple. I'll just have a 6-7 ounce piece of barbecued steak (cooked with a little bit of barbecue sauce) for my 400 calories, and maybe add some lettuce for some variety and fiber with negligible calories. Figuring out the calories of this meal is quite simple. You just find the food you want, and figure out how many ounces or quarter cups you need to get to the number of calories you have allotted for the meal.

But some meals will be more complicated -- at least if you're like most people.

SIDE NOTE:

Here's how to figure out the calorie content of a serving of a casserole you've made.

I'll use one of my own creations as an example. This is a recipe that I adapted from a recipe I call "Italian Casserole" on my website: <http://www.the-low-carb-way.com/> .

It's not really Italian anymore, since I've come to use *unsweetened salsa* in place of *unsweetened tomato sauce*.

I'd call it a Mexican recipe, but I still use mozzarella instead of a Mexican combination of cheeses.

Let's call it "Mexitalian Casserole", how about that?

Here are the ingredients for the whole casserole, with calorie counts for each part.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>CALORIES</u>
16 oz French cut green beans	140
22 ounces of turkey burger	1100
12 eggs	960
24 ounces of sour cream	1440

24 ounces of salsa (not a sweet salsa)	160
32 ounces of shredded mozzarella cheese	2300
	<hr/>
	6100

In case you're curious about how to make this casserole, here are the directions: You set your oven to about 425 degrees Fahrenheit, mix the eggs with the green beans on the bottom of the dish(es), brown the turkey burger and add that into the mixture. Then you dollop the sour cream evenly around on top of the mixture. Don't try to spread it yet, or you'll have a mess. Put some salsa on the sour cream, and now you can spread the mixture. (the water in the salsa makes the sour cream easier to spread). Do this until you have a salsa/sour cream mixture layered on top of the casserole. Now put this in the oven for 30 minutes. Then put the cheese on top and let it bake for 15 additional minutes, or until the cheese has the exact browned look that you love.

Now it might seem inconvenient that the whole casserole comes to 6100 calories instead of 6000. Given that I use 400 calorie meals, a 6000 calorie casserole would yield 15 meals exactly. But there will be an extra 100 calories this way.

But, actually, this is quite fortunate. There is always some of the casserole that sticks to the dish (or dishes -- I actually use a 9x13, and a 9x9 to hold this casserole) and serving utensils -- not to mention your eating utensils and plate. (I only lick my plate clean when I'm alone ☺)

And I'd say a good estimate for the amount you will lose on the dishes and utensils is 100 calories by the time you're done with the whole casserole.

So the official calorie count for this casserole is 6000 calories, and this comes to 15 servings for me.

In general, you figure out the total calories in the dish (X). Then you divide by the number of servings (Y), and this will give you your calories per serving (X/Y).

In my case the value of X is 6000, and the value of Y is 15, so the value of X/Y is 400.

Now, if you use a single baking dish, 15 servings might not be as convenient, or as easy to apportion, as 16 servings. If

it's 16 servings, you can just cut the casserole in half each way, and then cut each section in half each way again.

That's not a problem, though. I can easily decide to divide the casserole into 16 servings instead. But then I will have an extra 25 calories to work with, since each portion will now be only 375 calories.

And that sounds like a piece of casserole just waiting for a dollop of sour cream or guacamole 😊

Sometimes I want meals that involve more than one item. And then it's especially nice to record the combination in a meal list, so I don't have to do the calculations again.

Take a basic egg and cheese breakfast, for example. (Actually, I eat this combination at various times of the day). Eggs are 80 calories per egg. And cheese is about 80 calories per ounce. (Part skim Mozzarella is actually a little less, but it's close). This makes an ounce of cheese and an egg pretty much interchangeable.

If I'm feeling more eggy (my computer's grammar checker wants me to say 'eggier'), I'll have four eggs and one ounce of cheese for my 400 calories. If I'm feeling more cheesy (or cheesier), I'll have three eggs and two ounces of cheese for my 400 calories. (Or sometimes even 2 eggs and 3 ounces of cheese, if I'm feeling really cheesy!)

(If you're wondering why I'm not concerned about eating so many eggs, you should try to find *The Cholesterol Myths* by Ravnskov in your local library.)

For my late evening meal I sometimes feel like having something less meaty and more creamy. So I'll put together a little dish I learned from Arthur Agatston, author of the South Beach Diet. I use ½ cup of ricotta, some cocoa powder, and a couple packets of Splenda. When you blend that all together it's pretty tasty, and 200 calories. I can do this twice over the evening to get my 400 calorie meal. Or I can add some macadamia nuts or something to make up the rest of the calorie allotment.

SIDE NOTE

I'm still undecided about the merits of Splenda. Some, like Dr. Mercola, are wary of any unnatural sugar substitute. I do try to avoid Nutrasweet (aspartame), but have come to use Splenda (sucralose) from time to time. Time should tell whether this is a good idea or not. You will have to decide for yourself. I believe Dr. Mercola would recommend stevia, and you can certainly try substituting that if you wish.

So here's how I develop my personal meal list: I just write down meals as I make them up. Here is how part of my list might look:

400 calorie meals:

- 4 eggs and 1 ounce of cheese
- 3 eggs and 2 ounces of cheese
- 2 eggs and 3 ounces of cheese
- 3 eggs, 1 ounce of cheese and one medium sized apple.
- ½ cup of ricotta pudding, and 11 macadamia nuts.
- 1 cup portion of ricotta pudding
- 1/15th portion of Low Carb Mexitalian Casserole
- 1/16th portion of Low Carb Mexitalian Casserole + dollop of sour cream
- Etc.

Step Four: Plan your first day, and stick to it.

Now that you have meals to choose from, you're ready to plan your first day.

Now, think through your first day. What are you likely to do?

Are you the kind of person who gets up well before you have to leave for work, or who works from home? Perhaps you will want to cook breakfast.

Are you the kind of person who is always in a rush in the morning? Then maybe you will want to find a reasonable fast food choice for breakfast, like I did.

Here is a typical day for me:

Breakfast: Extreme Sausage Sandwich without bun

Lunch: 3 eggs and 2 ounces of cheese (if I'm out, I'll sometimes get this in the form of hardboiled eggs and shredded cheese at a grocery store salad bar. I put lettuce on top to make it look more "normal" for the faint of heart.)

Mid afternoon: 6-7 ounces of steak, One heart of romaine (I just eat the lettuce as-is, rather than cutting it up into little tiny salad pieces.)

Dinner: 6-7 ounces of steak, one heart of romaine

Mid Evening: 1 cup of ricotta pudding

SPEAKING OF SALAD...

I have a great name for a salad bar restaurant. At least I'm amused with the name. If any of you are thinking of starting such an establishment, you can have the name for free. Just remember where you got it, and give me a free salad sometime ☺

Alright, here's the name: "Lettuce Inn".

Can you imagine the commercials you could put together with that name? I'm thinking of the old Mervyn's commercials with the woman standing at the door at 5am saying "open, open, open."

You could have throngs standing outside the restaurant at daybreak chanting "Let us in, Let us in...."

Maybe someone has already used this name for a restaurant. But, if not, it's all yours. ☺

Now the meal plan I listed above isn't the kind of typical day you see in one of those low carb diet books. My meals don't take an hour to prepare. I don't get a dozen preparation dishes dirty with these foods. I don't need 14 different exotic spices. There aren't 4-5 little tiny portions of different foods in each meal.

This is real life food, baby!

The items are easy to prepare. Even the ricotta pudding is mixed right in the eating bowl.

I usually cook 2-4 pounds of steak at a time on the barbecue, and store the rest in the fridge. If I make a casserole, it does take about an hour to prepare and clean up after, but I get 15 servings out of it.

If you're like me, this is the way to go. Who has time to make dishes with 14 exotic spices in it, and 7 tiny courses? I don't. But maybe you do. If so, please invite me over for dinner. It's not that I mind eating those meticulously prepared meals, it's just that I don't like to prepare them. ☺

Once you have your first day planned out, do it as prescribed.

Step Five: Plan a whole week -- then transcribe your plan into a grocery list.

Now, we're going to talk about a very powerful step. It's a step that will make your calorie counting go almost on autopilot. If you can get in the habit of spending just 20 minutes a week thinking ahead, and planning out a **tentative** meal plan for the next 7 days, you will be way ahead of the game.

I say "tentative" because you don't want to feel enslaved by your diet. To borrow from someone who is generally regarded as a pretty wise teacher: The Diet is made for Man, not Man for the Diet.

So here's what I did for the first week. I decided I'd just have an extreme sausage sandwich every morning (not everyone can do this, but it sure makes my planning easier). I'd have half and half in my coffee every day. And I'd have four 400-calorie meals every day.

So basically, It's this:

7 extreme sausage sandwiches
Half and half
28 other 400-calorie meals

The only thing I have to figure out now is what I'll have for 28 meals. Well, if I make the Mexitalian casserole, that's 15 meals right there. And if I cook 48 ounces (3 pounds) of steak, that's another 7 meals.

So far that's 22 of the 28 meals. I still need six meals. So, let's see. What else might I want? Well, I sometimes enjoy the ricotta pudding, but, honestly, I don't like it every night. So let's say I eat a double serving (a full cup) of that three times during the week. And let's say I have some sort of egg and cheese mixture for the other three meals.

Here's what my meals look like, then:

15 meals = casserole
7 meals = extreme sausage sandwiches
3 meals = ricotta pudding
3 meals = eggs and cheese
7 meals = steak & romaine

Well, then I look at each of these items, and figure out what food I will need to get at the grocery store to make these meals. And that gets me a shopping list that looks like this:

Shopping list:

16 ounce bag of frozen, French style green beans
24 ounces of sour cream
24 ounces of salsa
A 32 ounce bag of shredded mozzarella
2 dozen eggs
2 bags of "hearts of romaine"
About 1.4 (that's one point four) pounds of turkey burger (that's about the amount in the packages my local Fred Meyer sells, so it's pretty convenient.)
A 2 lb block of cheese (whatever kind I feel like)
3 pounds of boneless steak.
1 32 ounce carton of Ricotta cheese.
1 box of Splenda packets
1 tin of unsweetened cocoa powder

Allowing for the fact that I don't consume all of the cheese, ricotta, Splenda, or cocoa during the week, my total food bill, including the extreme sausage sandwiches, comes to about \$60 per week (or about \$250/month).

The typical low carb dieter spends about \$400 per month, so my \$250 comes in on the frugal side. But a frugal *high carb* dieter can eat for about \$150 per month. Oh well, good health has a price.

Now this little exercise took me less than 10 minutes. But I have a high tolerance for eating the same things day after day. I'll switch things up the next week, though. Sometimes I even mix some fruit and berries in. That usually depends on how active I anticipate being in a given week.

You might take 20 minutes or so to put your weekly plan together, depending on the complexity of the meals you include, and the amount of variety you require.

Regardless, I'm sure you can see how nice it would be to know what to buy on Sunday night (or whenever) at the grocery store, and how nice it would be to go through your week knowing all the food you need is right on hand.

That confidence (that comes from knowing you have all you need) excludes a family of rationalizations that can lead you to cheat on your diet. Who among us

hasn't gone looking for a convenient low carb meal, only to find that there's nothing low carb in the fridge. If you have members of your family who aren't low carb, that's when *their food* starts calling your name ☺.

Now it's actually a good thing that there will be a little ricotta and some of the other cheese left at the end of the week, if I follow my plan. I'll tell you why in the next section.

Various Tips

Monitor Your Hunger -- Especially the First Two Weeks

Your initial calorie allotment is a guess. You might be off by a bit. If you short yourself too many calories you will feel it. You will have hunger pangs. When you short yourself, you usually coast through your first day, have a little edge of hunger your second day, and have a ravenous feeling the third day.

This leads to an important, but counter-intuitive piece of advice: **be prepared to add a whole meal to your day when hunger pangs get bad.**

Then get back to your plan the next day.

This won't hurt you any, really. If you are already trying to short yourself 400 calories a day, adding in 400 calories won't make you gain even an ounce of fat. And it will help you get through the day. And, if you misjudged your calorie needs, or if you are trying to have a deficit of more than 400 calories a day, you can even add in a 400 calorie meal and still lose weight that day!

If you don't give yourself an extra meal, *when you have ravenous hunger*, you are likely to do a binge, and those usually amount to 1000 calories or more -- at least my past binges have.

Now, if this happens more than twice in the first two weeks (I'm talking about really ravenous hunger, not that slight hungry edge -- there's a difference), and if you lost weight in those two weeks, then there's a good chance that you need more calories than you thought. In that case, you should add 200 calories to your daily allotment on an ongoing basis. That's great news! Congratulations!

The other thing you might do is notice your exercise habits. Maybe you didn't allow properly for your exercise program. If so, start allowing for it by increasing your calorie allotment.

Maybe your exercise is inconsistent. You'll lay around one week, and walk miles a day shopping during a vacation. Well, during the more active week, you should eat a little more. But make sure your extra calories are closely monitored and controlled. Don't just say, "I've been shopping, so I can have that plate of lasagna and a big ice cream sundae". Try to estimate how many extra calories you are burning, and add no more than that amount to your day.

That's why I said in the last section that it's a good idea to have a little more food on hand than you plan to eat. Sometimes it's a good idea to eat more than you planned. This will be true if you wind up being more active than you planned, or if your plan turned out to be too aggressive.

Let me put it this way: If someone cons me into doing a triathlon one day, I'm sure going to eat more than 2250 calories that day. I might add a thousand extra calories, or more, depending on how long the race is. It's not a good idea to short yourself too many calories in any one day.

Don't forget to adjust your calories as you lose weight.

Your fat burns calories. It burns calories all day long. It doesn't burn very much, but it's enough to make a difference as you lose weight. On some estimates people burn as much as 100 fewer calories per day when they lose 25 pounds.

If you have been losing a half a pound a week by shorting yourself 250 calories per day, by the time you lose 25 pounds, you will be shorting yourself only 150 calories a day. And you will experience a slowdown in your weight loss. You might even have a fairly lengthy plateau because of this.

The solution is easy. After every 20 pounds you lose, do one of two things. Either reduce your calorie allotment by 100 calories per day...

...or, ...

...even better, ...

...increase your activity by 100 calories a day. This won't be as hard as you think. You will feel better and more active once you've lost 20 pounds, and so you might feel more like getting some exercise. Go with that feeling.

If you have a lot to lose (over a hundred pounds), you might not feel all that energetic after the first twenty pounds are gone. So you might want to mess with your calories instead of your exercise. But if you can get yourself to do it, more exercise is the way to go.

Adjusting exercise is also simpler. You've done a lot of work to set up your diet at a certain calorie level. You've gotten used to it. It's become a matter of habit. Why mess that up? Just walk around the block a couple of times and snoop on

the neighbors while you're at it. (If you get arrested doing this, don't blame me, though ☺)

That leads to the final tip for this booklet...

Don't forget the power of exercise and increased activity.

Exercise is good for you for many reasons.

For example, it's good for your heart.

Did you know that if you get in the habit of exercising 30 minutes a day at an aerobic pace, your resting heart rate will lower by a few beats a minute?

During the 30 minutes you are exercising, your heart might beat an extra 60 beats per minute. But for 1410 minutes (the rest of the day) your heart might beat 5 beats fewer than normal per minute (let's say your resting heart rate drops from 70 to 65).

That means your heart will beat 5850 (7050 - 1800) fewer times per day. If your heart has only so many beats in it (and some scientists think there's some truth to that), you are extending the life of your heart by maybe 6%-10% by adding aerobic exercise.

And, when you're counting calories, increasing your activity will also mean that you can eat more food and still lose weight.

Now I don't like to exercise either. Sitting on a stationary bike for 30-40 minutes is not my idea of a good time. I'll do it, but it's not fun.

I'm looking for other activities I enjoy that can take the drudgery out of the picture. For me playing basketball is fun. I also would love to take up Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and that would burn calories at a pretty good clip, too. Those are ways to exercise and have fun at the same time.

Maybe you like similar activities. Or maybe you like taking long walks with friends around the neighborhood.

Whatever it is you enjoy, start doing it.

[Jim takes his nag hat off]

Now, let's look at a couple of great resources for further study before we go.

Two Great Resources For further Study

I want to leave you with two recommendations for further study.

Ultimate Diet Secrets

The first book I want to recommend was written by Gregory Ellis Ph.D. I mentioned it above. It's his book [Ultimate Diet Secrets](#).

Before telling you why I recommend his book, let me first warn you about a couple of things. On the page where Dr. Ellis tells you about his book, Dr. Ellis has a certain style that some will find abrasive, or even arrogant. Don't let this turn you off. Dr. Ellis knows what he's talking about.

Also, if you order just the electronic version of his book, it might take a while to download. If I remember correctly, it was something like 13-14 MB. On a dial-up connection this took me well over an hour to get. And this was frustrating, because I was really eager to begin reading his book. The book is fairly long, but the big file size is primarily due to the many pictures Dr. Ellis includes in his book.

So keep that in mind. Even if it is an instantly downloadable eBook, you won't quite be reading it instantly, unless you have a good broadband connection (and, even then, it might take a few minutes).

But, with those two caveats aside, there is very much to recommend [Ultimate Diet Secrets](#).

First, it is the only book-length treatment of a calorie-conscious low carb diet that I know of.

Second, it is full of very good science. The ideas Dr. Ellis presents have been tested repeatedly, and are very solid.

Third, the book is substantial. It is well over 300 pages long, and has many pictures and charts.

Fourth, you have various options when buying the book. You can get a lite version, if you don't want to spring for the whole book. And you can get a hardbound copy with your download, if you want to spring a little extra.

Actually, I'm not doing the book justice with my description here, so let me refer you to Dr. Ellis's website where he tells you more about [Ultimate Diet Secrets](#).

Stop Cheating On Your Low Carb Diet!

The second book I want to recommend is my own book. And, believe it or not, I have to warn you about a couple of things here, too.

The book is not a diet plan. If you are looking for a book that will give you a plan that will help you lose weight, you won't find that in my book. I don't give any recipes (though there is a free bonus recipe that comes with the book ☺). And I don't explain much about how a low carb diet works in our bodies.

But my guess is that you probably already have a book, or a shelf full of books, that tell you all those things.

Also, the book is available only via an electronic download. There is no hardbound version available.

With those caveats out of the way, I believe there is much to recommend [Stop Cheating On Your Low Carb Diet!](#) (I'm not shouting. The exclamation point is actually part of the title ☺)

First, it is the only dieting psychology book that is dedicated to the low carb dieter.

Second, the advice in the book is based on a new model of human motivation that comes out of the fields of Evolutionary Psychology and Cognitive Science. But don't worry, the model is relatively easy to understand, and you don't actually have to believe in evolution to appreciate the theory, if that's a concern.

Third, you can download it relatively quickly. I don't have any pictures in the book, so the first edition is only about 350KB, and should download in about a minute or so on a 56Kb modem, depending on the connection you have with the internet.

Again, I don't think the description I am giving you here does the book justice, so let me refer you to my website where I can tell you more about [Stop Cheating On Your Low Carb Diet!](#) (I'm still not shouting ☺)

Thank you for reading this little Calorie-Conscious Low-Carb Diet Primer.

Feel free to pass it on to others. If you have a website, feel free to give the book away to your visitors.

I wish you well, and much success in reaching your weight loss and wellness goals.

--Jim