



Fat Adapt - Weeks 1 & 2

This plan includes:	This plan is not suitable for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Meat✓ Fish & seafood✓ Vegetarian options✓ Dairy free options✓ Gluten free options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Diabetics (unless supported by a health professional)✗ Anyone under the age of 18 years✗ Pregnant women✗ Breastfeeding women✗ Vegans (does not include enough vegan options)

Burning fat isn't about willpower!

'Eat less and move more' is what we all strive to do to shift those stubborn pounds, but it's not so simple, and it's not a long-term fix. Science is slowly unravelling the facts that as we eat less, our metabolism slows down.

Cutting calories may work for a few weeks, but you've probably experienced the dieting plateau when you were eating so well, only to see the numbers on the scales stall for weeks on end. This is simply due to your body lowering your calorie output to match your new lower intake of food, effectively slowing down your metabolism to keep you alive through a possible famine. The result? You give up after all the hard work, and with your sluggish metabolism, your body clings onto your body fat even more than before.

In this plan, I will be guiding you in a very different way, reprogramming your cells to prefer burning fat as their main source of fuel, allowing your body to easily access stored body fat rather than craving carbohydrates for energy. We will be resetting your hormones to control your appetite and boosting your metabolism to improve your energy production.

We will not be relying on willpower or restricted eating. Not only is this painfully boring and difficult to stick to, it's proven to be very ineffective. If you love delicious food including chocolate, coffee and the occasional glass of wine and a flexible eating plan, you will enjoy this plan. If you have a big appetite and carbohydrate cravings or if you have yo-yo dieted in the past and feel that your metabolism is slower than it used to be, this plan is for you.

Fat adapt

Low carb to kick start fat burning

For the first 2 weeks we will be encouraging your body to adapt to burn fat as its primary source of energy. As your body either burns carbohydrates or fat, we will achieve fat burning by following a low carbohydrate diet. Carbs will be slowly introduced later on in the plan as they are important for keeping your metabolism high and a lot easier on your social life, but low carb is the most effective way to kick start fat loss.

What is a carbohydrate?

We've all heard of carbohydrates, fats and protein (I hope!) but when you come to think about it, what exactly is a carbohydrate?

Carbohydrates are the sugars, starches or fibres found in foods. Glucose and fructose are examples of simple carbohydrates which give cake and fruit their sweet taste.

A lot of savory foods including crisps and bread are also high in carbohydrates, consisting of chains of glucose molecules connected together. These are the forms which don't taste sweet on the tongue, but once they break down in the body and the glucose molecules separate, they effectively act the same as sugar.

White bread = sugar, once digested

The fat storing hormone - insulin

Carbohydrates have a huge impact on insulin levels in the body, a hormone made in the pancreas when glucose is raised in the blood. This release of insulin pulls glucose out of the blood stream and into your hungry cells, either to be used as energy or to be stored as fat. As we are not always active after a meal, carbohydrates are often stored as fat, hence the term, 'the fat storing hormone'.

Refined carbs such as biscuits, white bread and crisps are broken down very quickly, so they spike your blood sugar and therefore result in a high surge of insulin. The more refined the food is, the more it triggers your fat storing hormone!

When consuming refined carbs, your blood sugar levels will initially rise steeply, but then after insulin is released, this blood sugar level will drop. Eating like this throughout the day can cause a blood sugar roller coaster, and each time your blood sugar is low, you may feel hungry, crave carbohydrates and have low energy.

These fluctuations in blood sugar and dependence on carbohydrate-based foods for energy results in your body being fully in the 'sugar burning' mode. With this way of eating, your body is unable to tap into your body fat stores for energy. A diet high in carbohydrates will increase hunger and cravings for more.

Let's reduce your hunger hormones

Rather than worrying about calories, it's much easier to concentrate on reducing your appetite. Insulin and ghrelin are the two hormones impacting your hunger the most.

Insulin – fat storing hormone

Insulin we already know is closely related to carbohydrate intake, in particular simple sugars and refined carbs (e.g. chips and crackers) and fluctuations can significantly increase your appetite. In this plan we will be reducing carbs initially to help with this. Fats and protein have very different effects in the body. Fats have quite a neutral impact on appetite and are very satisfying. Protein is well known for its ability keep you satiated for a long time after a meal, keeping appetite under control. Aim to have 1g of protein per kg of body weight to keep your appetite low between meals e.g. if you weigh 70kg, aim to eat around 70g of protein each day.

Ghrelin – hunger hormone

Ghrelin is the main hunger hormone, like a little gremlin giving you a rumbling stomach when you haven't eaten much. Ghrelin is also increased significantly when you reduce calories over time, to try and get your body fat back to where it was before. This is another reason why drastically cutting calories makes fat loss so difficult! Instead, try to listen to your body's hunger signals. Only eat when you actually feel hungry (not just because it's meal time) and finish eating when you feel full. Eating slowly and chewing your food properly can also help your stomach to register when it is full sooner.

How to empty your carb stores

Your body is either burning glucose or ketones for fuel (ketones are derived from fat, so I will say fat to keep things simpler). We all know that our bodies store fat, so we have an abundance of this type of energy, but our bodies also store carbohydrates.

An average sized healthy adult can store about 500g of carbohydrate as glycogen. Muscles store about 400g of glycogen, the liver stores about 100g of glycogen and your blood circulates roughly 25g as glucose. If you empty these carbohydrate stores, your body then has no choice but to turn to your body fat as it's source of energy.

500g of glycogen is equivalent to 2000 calories. Within the first week of your plan, aim to burn through this 2000 calories worth of glucose at the gym, 3-4 intense workouts depending on your body size.

If you are eating low carb during this week and you manage to empty your glycogen stores, this will trigger body fat to be freed up to burn as fuel. When your body is transitioning from a sugar burner to a fat burner, you may feel temporarily weak for a couple of weeks. It usually takes 2-4 weeks for your body to adjust and feel normal again when your cells are happily burning through your body fat, so keep this in mind!

How many grams of carbs should I eat each day?

There's no need to count grams of carbohydrates if you follow the recipes suggested in this plan as they contain approximately 30-50g carbohydrates per day, but if you like number crunching or need guidance on what low carb actually means on your plate, here's a simple guide.

Grams of carbs each day

A low carbohydrate diet is considered to be around 20-60g carbohydrates per day. If you weigh under 65kg, aim for the lower end of this scale, at around 20-40g, and if you weigh 65kg or more, 40-60g carbohydrates would be suitable. Eating a slightly lower amount of carbohydrates on rest days would be ideal.

	Body weight less than 65kg	Body weight 65kg or more
Rest day	20-30g carbs	40-50g carbs
Exercise day	30-40g carbs	50-60g carbs

To put this into perspective, most people in the UK eat around 200-300g carbohydrates per day. Packaged foods list grams of carbohydrates per portion, but if you are unsure how many grams of carbohydrates are in a non-labelled food, 'MyFitnessPal' is a useful app which you can find the carb content of any food to track what you are eating. You may find that you only need to do this for a few days until you get the hang of estimating how much to have without counting everything.

Keep things moving with fibre

Filling half your plate with vegetables in the low carb list (see table) will help to ensure you have enough fibre in your diet, keeping your digestion moving. One of the biggest complaints of a low carb diet is constipation, not only is this uncomfortable, but this also results in hormones hanging around for too long in the digestive tract and being recycled in the body. Also, without enough fibre, it is difficult for toxins to leave your body.

Low carb / medium carb / high carb

To simplify your carbohydrate intake, freely eat foods listed in the low carb section in the table below, occasionally eat small portions of medium carb foods and avoid the high carb foods listed.

Low carb foods	Medium carb foods	High carb foods
Meat	Lentils	Rice
Fish	Beans	Pasta
Seafood	Chick peas	Cereal
Cheese	Green peas	Porridge
Eggs	Edamame beans (soy beans)	Muesli
Nuts	Apples	Granola
Plain yoghurt	Pears	Bread
Cream	Apricots	Crisps
Butter	Carrots	Crackers
Oil	Beetroot	Cake
Berries	Squash	Biscuits
Lemon	Dark chocolate	Chocolate (milk or white)
Lime	Milk	Sweets
Green leafy veg		Ice cream
Cauliflower		Potatoes
Broccoli		Chips
Tomatoes		Baked beans
Onion		Bananas
Leeks		Mango
Cabbage		Pineapple
Aubergine		Fruit juice
Cucumber		Fruit yoghurt
Peppers		
Asparagus		
Courgette		
Green beans		
Mushrooms		
Celery		
Avocado		
Olives		

Burning more calories while lying on the sofa

We may be counting carbohydrates in this plan at first, but we will not be counting calories. Calories in = calories out. This is true, but we know that reducing calories in reduces your metabolism, therefore reduces calories out. Instead, let's focus on increasing calories out. There's a couple of ways to do this.

Increase calories OUT with exercise

Firstly, you can exercise which is highly recommended, not just for calories burned but also for muscle building to increase metabolism. 3-4 sessions in the gym each week, keeping active throughout the day (10,000 steps) and a nice long 1-2 hour walk at the weekend is plenty.

Increase calories OUT with heat

Burning calories as heat, called 'thermogenesis' can also burn an extra 200 calories a day depending on the types of foods you eat. Protein increases the amount of energy you burn as heat, so ensuring you have adequate levels not only keeps you satisfied for longer after meals but will also help you to burn hundreds of extra calories while lying on the sofa! As mentioned before, aim to have 1g of protein per kg of body weight to keep your body burning like a furnace e.g. if you weigh 70kg, aim to eat around 70g of protein each day.

Government guidelines are to have 0.75g of protein per kg of body weight, but 1g may be more beneficial for weight loss, especially if you are physically quite active. You may wish to have up to 1.5g per kg body weight if you train hard with heavy weights, but ideally no more than this.

What about fat?

Ignore the media hype of 'low fat' processed foods which claim to do wonders for your waist line. There is nothing worse than artificially altered low fat foods with substituted sugars and other nasties which we are now realising cause more harm than good. Just think, real foods including butter eaten 100 years ago didn't make people overweight.

Dietary fats are your friend when it comes to cutting down body fat, as they do not stimulate fat storage like refined carbohydrates do. Those on a high fat diet and reasonably low carbohydrate diet have the lowest body fat levels.

Cooking with oils

When choosing oils to cook with, I would always recommend using the most heat stable fats which include coconut oil, butter, avocado oil and rapeseed oil. Olive oil is considerably stable when cooked at medium temperatures when roasting, but when fried it may start to oxidise, releasing harmful compounds. Delicate oils such as walnut oil are best eaten cold on salads. Any artificial fats such as margarine should be completely avoided as they contain fats and many other horrible ingredients that our bodies cannot recognise which disrupts fat metabolism.

Saturated fat

The saturated fat content of foods is still something that people look out for when trying to lose weight, however saturated fat is not as bad as initially thought, therefore I have included a healthy amount of plant based saturated fat (from coconut) in this diet plan.

Healthy fats

If you are worried about the omega-6 fatty acids in meat which increase inflammation in the body, if you can, opt for organic grass-fed meats which have a much healthier fat profile. The

omega-3 fatty acids found in fish are anti-inflammatory, therefore to balance inflammation in the body, oily fish is included in this diet plan as well.

Eat plenty of natural fats from foods such as fish, meat, seafood, nuts and seeds. If your body is turning into a fat burning machine, fat in your diet will only help to speed up this process.