



12-Week Best Shape of Your Life Challenge

PHASE Three: Support Package for Week 8

Playing with carbs for real weight loss!
~ Cycling, zig zagging, loading, tapering and more!



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Carbs and YOU! A detailed look.....



A few weeks back we talked averages in bodyweight and finding your Goal Weight...now I want to get more specific.

So say your Goal Weight is 120 pounds, so that means that you never stray below 1200 (remember, 120×10 for bare bones maintenance) and you eat within 1400-1900 calories(adding 200-500 calories a day, depending on how hard you're training that day, to support the addition of lean muscle without gaining fat.).

And we looked at only cutting calories by about 20-30% for a week at a time (rather than dip right down to your lower caloric intake based on your Goal Weight, which in this case is 1200-1400) because cutting too much is going to alarm your body and send it into a hoarder's response. (Remember way back at the beginning of the Challenge when we were just working on cleaning up your diet of all the breads and man-made stuff, and I said don't cut the nasties out all at once..just cut them in half for a week or 2, then in half again? Again, just another tactic to ensure we weren't putting you into starvation or alarm mode....we didn't want your body to hang onto your fat reserves, rather, we had to coax it into letting go of it slowly and with confidence.

So this is a great ball-park figure for you all to keep in mind, but what happens when you keep ingesting the same amount of calories, and the same foods for months on end? Your metabolism (and your ability to lose fat) may grind to a halt. That's because you've signaled your body that it needs to hoard fat because you're too consistent in your caloric intake....your body senses a starvation thing, so it won't let go of any more fat.

In body sculpting, we call this *hitting a plateau*. It happens to everyone (especially dieters, problem is, they try to get out of it the wrong way by dropping more calories or training more. Wrong!)

So you've spent all this time building nice, shapely muscle on your body, and you've been stripping off the fat, but it's halted. This is where competitors pull out their magic carb wands and do some fancy footwork...

If you're not having to cutting your calories by, say, more than 500 each day, you should be ok. But if you routinely ate 2200 and now you want to be 120 pounds and you need to cut it to 1500 on certain days, it'll be too much of a dip. You get my drift? Within 2 weeks, you should be eating in the 1400-1900 caloric range, depending on your Goal Weight.

How to Use Carbs to Lose Weight and Stay Lean all Year!

OK, so earlier we looked at some standard tools and some philosophies around calorie counting. Then later, we actually taught you how to do some calculating using a variety of methods. You know your GOAL WEIGHT by now and how many calories you need to eat to get there. You are understanding the 40/4020 ratios of protein, carbs and fats, and you know how many calories and grams (approximately) suit you. You know about starchy carbs and how you keep those away from late night and you circle them around your training, yes? So now that you've learned these basics (yes, these are only the basics!) and you're losing the weight, how do you keep it off for life?



Even if your math isn't stellar and you feel bogged down by it all, take heart! The next lesson is not as tough as you may think. In fact, if you never counted a calorie in your life, if you know and learn how to manipulate carbs, you're leagues ahead of anyone else. (Please note, I am NOT advocating a no-carb or a very-low carb diet unless of course you're 2 weeks out from contest, and then yes, we do the very low carb, but I assume you're not part of that crowd).

There are a variety of methods to choose from, but I'm going to share my secrets for staying lean year-round from my years of competitive figure training – *zig zag* and *carb cycling*. They're actually quite easy, they become second nature after awhile, and you can use them quite effectively every day without feeling deprived.

So let's recap – you want to continue to lose weight but you may have stalled out (this is likely because you've done the **linear method** for losing weight...cutting your calories to that perfect weight-loss number based on your goal weight. Good for awhile, but your body will catch on and it will halt its fat loss because of the consistent nature of this approach! That's also why most 'diets' fail, and why most people regain the weight after losing it..the linear approach to calorie cutting doesn't work!).

And if you cut your calories below your maintenance level (usually between 1200 and 1500 for most women), it's never long before your body recognizes the deficit and adjusts your fat burning thermostat so fewer calories are burned. The larger the drop in calories and the longer the drop is maintained, the bigger the drop will be in metabolism. (That's why I said in the beginning to only cut your calories by 20-30% at most).

Fortunately there are ways to trick your body into keeping your metabolism revved while you diet for fat loss. These methods are safe, but more importantly, with practice, you will get to know what works for you body-wise and lifestyle wise. There is no perfect way, only the perfect way FOR YOU! This is all about you coming to learn about your body, remember? You're as individual as anyone else!

The Zig Zag Method: you need a caloric deficit to lose weight, but you don't want it over a long period of the time or you'll grind to a halt in the fat-loss department. You can use the zig zag method at random – low calorie days followed by a high calorie day, which is the idea behind the once-a-week cheat meal – but let's make it a bit more structured. We'll use 3 day cycles: 3 low calorie days followed by one higher calorie day, and repeat—The 3 /1 Zig Zag Method.

Three low calorie days are set at 20% below your maintenance level, followed by 1 day at your maintenance level. So for example, my maintenance level is 1650 calories, so I would drop 330 calories (20%) down to 1330 calories for 3 days, then climb back up to 1650 calories for one day, and repeat.

Note: This is what I burn based on my size, age, bodyfat and activity level and as my activity level changes throughout the year, my maintenance level changes too. When I'm in contest prep, I'm training 7 days/week, so I have to recalculate my maintenance level again, and it's naturally higher.

The zig zag (or 3/1) method is without question the most effective method of fat loss and eating maintenance ever created, and has been the domain of bodybuilders and figure competitors for years. You can adjust it as you go, for example, you may need to kick-start things and drop over 30%, although this is a large drop, but as long as you raise your calories every fourth day, you'll be fine. It's effective for contest, to break fat loss plateaus, maintaining lean mass, and to wake up a sluggish metabolism.

So keep a journal, read labels, count calories and weight and measure everything...at least once. If you don't become familiar with the calorie content of your food, then you're just not that serious about your body and weight goals – you're guessing!

"Discipline is doing what is hard and necessary rather than what is fun and easy and doing it when it's necessary, whether you feel like doing it or not." Brian Tracy, motivational speaker.



The Carb Cycling Method: Another very effective fat loss and weight maintenance tool is carb cycling. Personally, I've been doing it for years with great success, and it's second nature now...in fact, if I stray, I feel lousy, tired and guilty. No more!

Similar to above, it's a 3 day on (moderate carbs) to one day off (low carbs), except you're *cycling the carbs* up and down as opposed to the calories. You can also combine the 2 methods in sync with one another: low carbs on low calorie days. It's almost a natural fit, but remember, like calories, if you're used to eating the man made carbs, and lots of them, if you cut them too fast, you'll hurt and stall out your weight loss efforts! (And don't tell me you only eat natural carbs like fruits and veggies all the time... everyone with the exception of only a handful of people I've met in 30 years, or if you're in pre-contest mode, eat the man made stuff- bread, crackers, pasta, designer coffees, packaged goods etc.)

Here's how it works: you eat low carbs for 3 days, higher carbs for one day and repeat. So it makes it easier to stick with because no matter how difficult it is to get through those 3 low days, you have a 'high' day to look forward to. And you get noticeably leaner with every 3-day low carb cycle as your body dips into stored bodyfat without the carbs readily available for fuel.

It's important you don't keep your carbs low for too long, because while you may burn fat fast, it's only for awhile. Pretty soon, your body forgets how to burn carbs for fuel, and when you go back to eating them again, your body blows up overnight because it retains *everything*, and then some! Low carb diets are NOT lifestyle programs.

It's impossible to tell you the specific, desirable formula for YOU because people and their needs vary so much, and the best way to know is to get started, keep track and learn your individual body's needs. But on average, women should consume 60-100 grams of carbs on low days and 150-200 grams on high days (make this your cheat day!) (For me, personally, I find 60-80 grams on low days works best, and high days are 120-150, because I've done this before and I know what works for me. I'm only 5'2" and 118 pounds so if I do over 150 grams of carbs, I blow up like a Christmas turkey! **Physique Athlete...know thyself!**

Example: women / 1400 calories / 3 days low carbs

Protein 40% = 560 calories = 140 grams

Carbs 30% = 420 calories = 105 grams

Fats 30% = 420 calories = 47 grams

1800 calories / 1 day high carbs

Protein 30% = 540 calories = 135 grams

Carbs 50% = 900 calories = 225 grams

Fats 20% = 360 calories = 40 grams

To put it in perspective, a cup of pasta is 50 grams, an apple is 20, 2 cups of broccoli is 12 grams, 1 choc. chip cookie is 16 grams, 1 med. potato is 30 grams, 1 banana is 30 grams, 1 bagel has 75 grams. See page 3 for more counts... better yet, pull out or calorie counter and get acquainted with them yourself!

You may need a refresher on grams and calories again, but keep in mind:

Protein: 1 gm = 4 calories

Carbs: 1 gm = 4 calories

Fats: 1 gm = 9 calories

If you didn't know these basic formulas, it's amazing you got this far in life! Really, we had to learn what a nickel, a dime and a dollar are worth and how to tally them up, so I'm always amazed that schools don't teach us this. We need to do the math with our own bodies! So pull out your **calorie counter** and get acquainted with your carb counts, ok?

Add in carb tapering to both the **zig zag and carb cycling** methods to ramp up fat loss: After 4 in the afternoon, choose fibrous carbs (or after meals 3 or 4 ...remember, you're eating 4-6 times a day, right?) You **MUST** eat smaller and frequently throughout the day in order to lose weight...it doesn't mean eat 6 meals, but 6 times.... a snack is not a meal, so 15 almonds is a snack is not a meal, and is worth 150 calories... stay in control here!

So when we taper, remember, we eat non-starchy carbs (fibrous) after 4 pm or so. This is a practice I never fail to do, carb tapering is by far my most prolific weight loss tactic ever...I use it every day. So keep your breads pastas, heavy starchy carbs like potatoes and rice before 2 pm, and eat your non-starchy ones after – salad, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, kale...anything that doesn't feel 'gummy' in your mouth is non-starchy and lower on the glycemic index....and that means it's non starchy.

What does 25 grams of carbs look like?

The following table (right) is a list of foods that equal 25 grams. So on low carb days, you're allowed 2-4 total servings, on your high calorie day, you're allowed 8-10 total.

PS—Helpful hint: If you've got an event in a few days and you just have to fit into that small dress without your belly showing, do a mini carb depleting and up your water for 2-3 days before the event (so no starchies after 4 pm, and cut your daily carbs down to around 50 grams total) and drink lots of water. Then the day before the event, cut out all starchies totally, eat only 50 or so grams of fibrous and very little water....there' you've just done carb depleting, what competitors do before every show to come in lean and tight! I do this before every photo shoot, in fact!

2 perogies
one small banana
one small pear
one large orange
1/3 cup, + two tablespoons oatmeal
six oz. orange juice
8 oz. apple juice
one small apple
half small cantaloupe
one cup applesauce (unsweetened)
1/4 cup apple butter
4 oz. potato (pre cooked)
half cup mashed potatoes
3 oz. yam, pre cooked
3/4 cup corn
3/4 cup rice (cooked)
one cup peas
one oz. pasta (dry weight)
half english muffin
one oz hot cereal (dry weight)
two slices whole grain bread
two slices calorie reduced bread
half fat free bran muffin
half bagel (check labels...they're all different!)

Learn your carbs, but more importantly, your individual body on carbs...It's not just about cutting them out, in fact, that'll cause you to lose all your muscle and lower your metabolism! It'll take some time, because carbs alter our physique (and weight loss like nothing else!) But doing the math, and continually assessing our body, training and energy levels is worth it! When you get control of your carbs, you control your body and *life*!

“Take twice as long to eat half as much”

- Anonymous



“Gluttony is an emotional escape, a sure sign that something is eating us.”

- Peter De Vries



Me and fellow lifter Jacqueline Lewis competing at the Westerns. I was 35, she was 32...late-comers to the sport, but nevertheless, we did well.

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