



## Why Paleo for Weight Loss & Health?

If your goal is to lose weight and transition to a healthy diet, Paleo is for you. Paleo works so well for weight loss for so many people because it spontaneously reduces calorie intake and overrides the powerful brain mechanisms that can overrule weight loss efforts.

When we voluntarily reduce calorie intake, three different things happen:

1. Our resting metabolic rate goes down, so the number of calories we expend just sitting there at rest drops.
2. Our appetite increases; and
3. We absorb more calories from the same exact amount of food. We could eat the same amount of food but actually harvest more calories.

These are evolutionary survival mechanisms that were to keep us safe during times of food shortage, which from an evolutionary perspective, that was the challenge. We did not have 7-Eleven or Costco. We could not just go down and get food whenever we wanted it, so these mechanisms are hardwired survival mechanisms that would have protected us throughout the vast majority of our evolutionary history, but they backfire in an environment such as the modern one that we live in today, where food is readily available.

Willpower is a limited resource. This has been studied. If you are fighting these hardwired survival mechanisms, eventually most people are going to lose. It is just impossible, almost, to overcome these hardwired physiological signals.

What does this mean? It means that the holy grail of weight loss is some kind of intervention that causes a spontaneous reduction in calorie intake. That is what will lead to weight loss, and voluntarily reducing calorie intake engages all of these survival mechanisms that work against our weight loss effort. Spontaneous calorie reduction, meaning just an involuntary reduction in calorie intake, does not appear to engage those mechanisms. In other words, eating less without *trying* to eat less. That sounds pretty good, of course, doesn't it? The really compelling argument for a Paleo type of diet is that this is exactly what it has been shown to do, and it is why Paleo works so well for weight loss for so many people. It is spontaneously reducing calorie intake.



## Benefits of a Paleo Diet

- Paleo does not require calorie counting.
- Paleo has been shown to be more satiating or satisfying per calorie consumed compared to Mediterranean diets and low-fat diets.
- Paleo has been shown to improve metabolic health, stabilize blood sugar, decrease triglycerides and bad cholesterol, and reduce inflammation.

It does not require forced restriction of any macronutrient, so it allows for flexible intake of carbohydrate, fat, and protein, depending on the individual's needs, and it tends to be higher in protein than other diets, especially vegetarian and vegan. This is important because protein is the most satiating of all macronutrients, and higher protein diets are consistently shown to help reduce body fat. Paleo provides a high level of variety of nutrient-dense foods, so it is healthy overall, and it is easier for patients to adopt.

## Strategies that improve weight loss

Within Paleo, there are particular strategies that can be used to improve weight loss:

- Keep Food Simple
- Eat Enough (But not Too much)
- Choose a Carbohydrate intake that matches your activity levels
- Move through the day
- Include Whole Lifestyle Modifications Consider Tracking your Diet

## Exercise

Is exercise or diet more important for weight loss? Diet, actually, is the key factor to successful weight loss. You cannot exercise yourself out of a bad diet. Within the category of exercise, the type of exercise is less important than consistency. Having said that, exercise has been shown to be very beneficial, especially for maintaining weight loss. If a you lose weight on a particular diet, you will be much more likely to maintain that weight loss if you are exercising. The most important factor when it comes to exercise is whether you like to do it. If you don't like to do it, you won't stick with it. A lot of studies have shown that long-term consistency of exercise is dependent upon enjoyment of it. Choose an exercise routine that you will stick to and that you actually like doing, not necessarily the "best" exercise for weight loss. As a general guide, a mixture of resistance training such as weights and steady-state cardiovascular type of exercise such as swimming, running, elliptical, or some kind of sport activity is the best combination for weight loss.

## What to do when weight loss does not happen?

The first thing would be to reevaluate calorie intake. You may be eating too many calories to lose weight, and despite some claims, calories do count when weight loss is the goal, especially when the you have less weight to lose, for example, 10 to 20 pounds. Tracking intake of calories can be helpful in some cases to help the you stay on target.