

DAY 3

THE BALANCED MEAL



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Today we learn about another cornerstone of the 21-Day Slimdown: what you will be eating. By the end of the day, you are going to eat one perfectly balanced meal. In the 21-Day Slimdown, it is imperative you have both a lean protein and a starchy carb at each meal with a fibrous vegetable thrown in as often as you wish. The lean protein and starchy carb are the two vital elements in your eating program, and you want to do your best to get both on your plate at every meal.

I have no doubt that some of you are already thinking, “Lean proteins, starchy carbs and fibrous vegetables? You call that appetizing?” If you see the simple recipes and meals I provide for you each day, you’ll realize very little is being removed from your usual choices of foods. You’ll only end up preparing or ordering some of those foods differently.

THE NEED FOR BALANCE

Here is the beauty of eating this kind of balanced meal. You will be eating twice the amount of actual food you usually eat in a typical high-fat meal, and you’ll still be taking in fewer calories! I can’t tell you enough that by eating more high-quality foods, you lose weight faster!

Every time you eat, it is important for you to remind yourself that all calories are not created equal. The calories you get when you eat a french fry are far different from the calories in a baked potato. If you eat a bite of food that contains just 1 gram of fat, you will have ingested 9 calories (those are called fat calories). But food from 1 gram of starchy carbs provides 4 calories, and food from 1 gram of lean protein also has just 4 calories.

Do you realize the implication of these numbers? Here is what you could substitute for 2 teaspoons of butter: ½ cup of oatmeal, four egg whites, 2 cups of broccoli, 4 cups of lettuce or 1½ cups of air-popped popcorn. That’s a heck of a lot of food. At the University of Alabama, doctors asked a group of volunteers to eat low-fat foods until they felt full. The doctors then asked another group to eat high-fat foods until they felt full. On the high-fat diet, the volunteers usually started feeling full after having about 3,000 calories per day. On the low-fat diet, the volunteers started feeling full after eating just 1,570 calories per day.

I was once on a national talk show, and without my knowledge the producers had prepared five meals that fit the 21-Day Slimdown. They rolled all the meals out on a table in front of me.

The hosts stared at the food and then looked at me dubiously. "You mean to tell us you can eat all this food in one day and actually lose weight?" one of the hosts asked.

"Easily," I said. "I can do it because all the food you're looking at is composed of starchy carbs and lean protein. That kind of food doesn't get stored as fat. Do you realize that one hamburger, a large order of fries and a chocolate shake have more calories than four grilled chicken breasts, two baked potatoes, 2 cups of rice and 6 cups of fibrous vegetables?"

The hosts' jaws dropped.

"And do you know that your 12-ounce soda and candy bar are equivalent in calories to the 10 egg whites, 1 cup of oatmeal and toast that I eat in the mornings? And here's the kicker. That kind of food you're eating is more inclined to go to your fat cells and make you look fat. My food acts like fuel."

The hosts weren't sure what to say. I think I had made my point.

The lean protein and starchy carb combination is the ideal way to regulate your blood sugar level, fuel your muscles and give you the immediate energy to function properly. It keeps you from experiencing sugar cravings that can lead to wild chocolate binges, and it can prevent those insulin-caused peaks and valleys that can make you pig out.

Most important, if you eat the proper balance of starchy carbs and lean proteins at every meal, you are essentially shooting the equivalent of jet fuel into your body and forcing your metabolism to operate at a much more rapid rate! The faster your metabolism, the faster your calories are burned off.

Let's say that you were very conscientious about spacing every meal evenly apart during the day. But in one meal, all you ate were starchy carbs (for instance, a large baked potato), in another meal it was all protein (a serving of chicken the size of your palm) and in another meal it was all fibrous vegetables (a large salad). The problem with this kind of eating is that your muscle tissue will only take in so many carbs and so much lean protein at a time. If you eat more than the proper amount of starchy carbs and proteins at one meal, your muscle tissue won't be able to absorb it. Off to the fat cells the excess carbs and protein go.

On the other hand, if you don't eat a protein and starchy carb at each meal, your blood sugar might lower too quickly and lead you to binge on high-fat foods. With a balanced eating program, the desire for fat significantly diminishes.

YOUR DAY 3 EATING GUIDE

As I said earlier, we're going to take it slow as we move into our eating plan. Today, all I want you to do is try to make Meal 4 perfectly balanced. As for the other meals, I want you to find ways to cut back your normal intake of fat or at least substitute slightly better foods for the ones you normally eat.

Below is a list of sample meals. But please take note: You do not have to eat those foods if you don't like them. If you hate turkey sandwiches, for example, then come up with a different protein to eat. Forcing yourself to eat foods you hate is a guarantee you will quit this program before the week is over.

MEAL	EATING GUIDE
BREAKFAST	Cereal with skim milk and two slices of toast with jam.
LUNCH	A turkey sandwich with mustard (never mayonnaise) and chips.
SNACK	Try crunchy vegetables (such as a bag of baby carrots from the grocery store) instead of a candy bar.
DINNER	Here is your perfectly balanced meal. One chicken fillet grilled with no oil or butter, a baked potato with fat-free cheese, fat-free sour cream and chives, and a salad with fat-free dressing.
SNACK	Try a bowl of oatmeal (using little or no sugar) instead of something like ice cream.

YOUR DAY 3 WORKOUT

Again, it's very simple. You must complete only two 60-Second Workouts. For your upper-body workout, do a Bicep Curl. Stand with your knees and hips slightly bent to create a slight forward tilt with the upper body. Keep your back straight and shoulders back, and your arms should be straight down at your sides with your elbows slightly bent. Now, raise your lower arms as far as possible without moving your shoulders or upper arms. When you reach the top of the movement, squeeze the biceps, then slowly lower them back down and repeat for 60 seconds. If you wish, you can hold a soup or vegetable can in each hand while performing the exercise for extra resistance.

For your lower-body workout, do the Reverse Lunge. This is a great overall leg exercise. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart with your knees and hips slightly bent. Hold your arms to your sides. Take one foot and take a giant step backward. Plant your toe firmly against the ground with the knee only slightly bent. Hold for a couple of seconds, maintain your balance and then return to your starting position. Make sure to keep your back straight. Then begin again, this time stepping back with the other leg.

EVENING PEP TALK

By now, you've had your first 21-Day Slimdown meal, and I promise you, your fat cells are in trouble. In the coming days, as you add more Slimdown meals to your eating guide and start your exercise program, your body will start going through incredible changes! Just hold on. As long as you follow this program, it will be impossible for you not to lose weight!



Slimdown Tip:

Determining How Much Food You Need

Here is the standard rule I follow for men and women: **Your protein (such as a piece of lean meat) should be able to fit into your hand, your starchy carb should be about the size of your fist and your fibrous vegetable should be able to fit into a small cereal bowl.** That's it. If you're a larger person, you might add a little more food, but anyone staying within the above parameters is going to be on track.

You never really have to carry around one of those 500-page books that tell you the calorie content of everything. If you're eating the right kinds of food at each meal, and if they are approximately the sizes I mentioned, the number of calories and fat grams will take care of themselves. You just have to make sure you're getting the right balance and right proportions of food!