

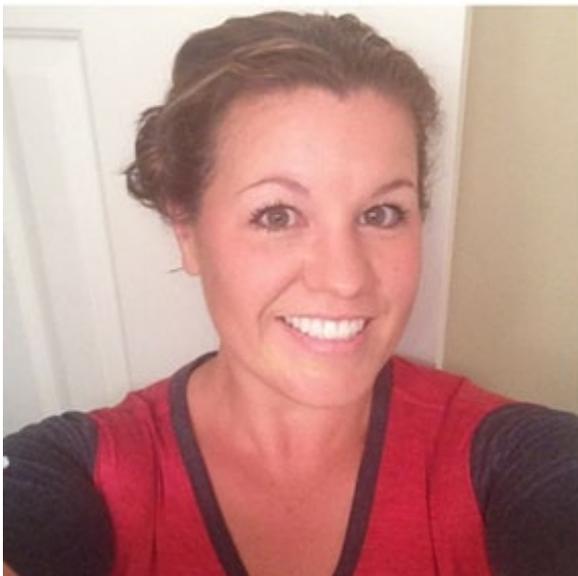


**PRIMAL**  
**POTENTIAL**

**2015  
FAT LOSS  
BEST PRACTICES**

We want results. I'd say we're tired of wanting results and ready to start getting them. But even that's not enough. We don't want to do the work over and over again, working hard to lose the weight, watching it pile back on and then doing the work all over again, feeling like it's even harder than it was before. Sound familiar? I hear ya, I've been there.

In fact, I yo-yo dieted my way up to almost 350 pounds.



Despite being extremely overweight, I was completely **obsessed with weight loss**. I thought about it incessantly and found it completely exhausting. I was tired of trying & failing. I was tired of putting my life on hold until “someday” when I might feel good about my body.

Eventually, I realized that my strategies were all wrong. I was following “conventional wisdom” that wasn’t created to help me lose weight. It was actually created to help me stay beholden to everyone who was either selling food or selling a temporary weight loss solution. I had to change strategy. I did. I got back to the basics and eliminated the fads and short-term solutions and now I help other people find what works for their bodies. **I want to help you find what works for yours.**

It’s time we get back to the basics. It’s time that we really evaluate what our bodies were designed for, what our bodies truly need, and how our bodies can be set up to **burn fat without crash dieting or over-restriction.**

## How We’ve Got It Wrong

We have subscribed for far too long to the notion that we just need to eat less and move more. **It’s just not true.** Or, at least, it is not entirely true and it’s very misleading.

Here is an irrefutable truth: If you give your body more fuel than it needs (via food), it has to store the excess. Period. When you over fuel your body, you will gain weight. This weight might be muscle or it might be fat or it might be a combination of the two, but when you are in a state of energy excess, **you will store what your body does not need.**

However, the reverse side of the equation isn’t quite so straightforward. We operate as if being in a calorie deficit by eating less and/or moving more means that we will burn excess body fat. Maybe. Maybe not. When you consume less energy (via food) than your body needs for operations, your body has options. Fat loss is only one of those options. Let’s take a look at the options your body has when you are in a calorie deficit:

1. Fat burning
2. Muscle burning
3. Lowering metabolic rate and putting your body in “neutral” while triggering hormonal alarms which you experience as low energy, cravings & hunger
4. All of the above

So what determines what path the body takes? You do. The way you go about creating hormone balance (via diet and lifestyle) and a calorie deficit will determine which path your body takes.

**Implementing the strategies included in this comprehensive guide will set you up for fat burning, sustained energy, restful sleep, fewer cravings, less hunger and a body composition to get excited about!**

## The 80/20 Rule

You've probably heard of the 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle. It essentially states that 80% (or more) of your results come from just 20% (or less) of your efforts. When you apply this universal principle, you can essentially do less, expend less energy & effort, and get more results.

You don't need to do **everything** to get results. You simply need to identify which behaviors, actions, habits or eliminations deliver you the greatest results and then invest your time & energy into executing those things while letting go of everything else that fragments your energy & willpower.

We have this awful habit of feeling like fat loss is all or nothing. We have to eat a perfectly clean breakfast, drink all the water, get 10,000 steps, hit the gym 4 times each week, sleep for 8 hours, stop eating sugar, etc, etc, etc.

When we pursue that path, we exhaust ourselves. **Complexity is the enemy of execution.** When we try to do everything, we end up with nothing. Nothing to show for our efforts and mentally & emotionally exhausted. We're fragmenting our attention and draining our willpower to achieve things that probably aren't generating measurable results. Wasting time.

We have to invest the time in identifying **our** most powerful 20% of actions, habits and behaviors. Then, invest our energy establishing those things, one at a time, as unshakable habits, not short-term pursuits.

The powerful 20% are what I call your "big rocks". These are the things that really move the needle for **you**. Your big rocks are likely different from my big rocks. That's ok. That's to be expected.

So how do you find your big rocks?

You need to start to pay much more attention to your food choices and how they make you feel. Most of us know more about reality TV stars or professional athletes than we do about our own bodies. That's not gonna work.

You'll need to pay attention to the circumstances surrounding your great food choices and your not-so-great food choices. You'll want to avoid getting critical of the bad days but rather get **curious**. Bring curious attention. That weekend bender, what were the surrounding circumstances?

- Did you over-restrict during the week?
- Did you not have healthy, convenient choices available?
- Were you pre-menstrual?
- Sleep deprived?
- Lonely, angry, frustrated or disappointed?
- Were you using food as a way to celebrate?
- Start to be a student of your behavior.

## How to Track

You can use an app, a paper journal or anything in between. I am a big fan of Google Docs because you can use a chart or document template and you can update it on one device and it will sync with all your other devices automatically.

Tracking does not take a lot of time. It takes less than 5 minutes each day and it has a handful of extremely valuable benefits.

- It helps you stay accountable
- It brings your attention & focus to your goals
- It helps you see what foods satisfy you and what foods don't
- It helps you understand what habits & behaviors set you up for success and which ones contribute to choices that won't help you reach your goals

Take 5 minutes each day to write down the following:

- Sleep quantity & quality
- What you eat, how much & when
- Any physical activity
- Your hormonal biofeedback (hunger, energy & mood, cravings)

Tracking hunger, energy, mood & cravings can be odd at first. Sometimes we aren't really aware of them. I get that. Here's how I recommend you get started: just make note of the extremes. If you find yourself ravenously hungry at 2pm, rank that hunger on a scale of 1-10 and make note of the level and the time. Take the same approach with mood, cravings & energy. Note the extremes, rank them on a scale of 1-10 and note the time.

## How Tracking Identifies Your Big Rocks

Once you are tracking consistently, every day without exception, you'll start to identify trends. These trends, as you become aware of them, will help you identify your big rocks. **Remember, your big rocks are the few things that drive results.** This is where you want to invest your energy. These are the few things that either help you make great choices or help you avoid making not-so-great choices.

Examples of what you might find include:

- On days you have carbs at breakfast you experience more hunger & cravings and have lower energy in the mid-afternoon. Avoiding carbs at breakfast might be one of your big rocks.
- A poor night of sleep leads to a day with lower motivation to make good choices and more cravings. Sleep quality & quantity might be one of your big rocks.
- When you feel stress or pressure you turn to food as a distraction and/or to avoid taking action on a project or deadline. Mindful eating might be one of your big rocks.
- Your overeating almost always happens after 7pm and in front of the TV. Filling up on fat loss foods at dinner and/or eating without distractions might be some of your big rocks.



## Carb Backloading

Carb backloading is without question one of the most effective fat loss strategies. Carb backloading refers to the practice of avoiding carbs in the morning and afternoon and limiting them to your evening meal.

I know, this flies in the face of what we've been told for most of our lives, right? We've been told to eat carbs in the morning so we have all day to burn it off. I'm not going to go into where that originated here, but I will point out that that philosophy started to spread with the introduction of breakfast cereals and the plethora of other breakfast foods that flooded the market.

Instead of diving into the myths, let's discuss the facts. Why do we want to avoid carbs in the morning when the goal is fat loss? It is all about the unique hormonal environment in the body when we wake up. You have been fasting overnight. Your blood sugar is at its **most** sensitive point. This is when you will be most sensitive to the introduction of carbohydrates.

I like to explain it with a simple analogy: imagine you have been in a dark room – totally pitch black – for 8-12 hours and someone comes in and suddenly turns on a flood light. You'd have a pretty major reaction, right? Exaggerated, almost. Why? Because you've been in total darkness for quite a while. But what if you had been outside in the sunlight for the last 8-12 hours and then someone came out and turned on the same floodlight? Very little response, if any, right? And far less of a reaction compared to the dark room scenario, right?

This is very similar to the unique hormonal environment you're in upon waking. You haven't eaten in many hours, your blood sugar is low and you don't have much insulin (the fuel delivery hormone) in your system (because there isn't any fuel). Your body will have an exaggerated response to the introduction to carbohydrates in the morning. You will experience a more significant rise of blood sugar in the morning than you would to the same exact food choice later in the day.

There are two primary ways this impacts fat burning:

1. It produces an exaggerated insulin reaction
2. It triggers excess hunger & cravings

Let's take a look at the exaggerated insulin reaction first. Remember that your unique sensitivity to carbs in the morning will elevate your blood sugar more than it would later in the day. Because of this more significant increase in blood sugar, we see a more significant insulin response.

Insulin is a storage hormone. It responds to sugar in the blood and it ushers it out of the blood & away to be stored in the muscle, liver or body fat. The presence of insulin lets your body know that there is a fuel excess and triggers your body to go into storage mode. Guess what you can't do when your body is in storage mode? Burn fat. That's right. Fat burning gets turned off when your body goes into storage mode.

So, we have this exaggerated blood sugar response, which creates a larger insulin release. More insulin, more time out of fat burning mode. Later in the day we'd see a smaller elevation of blood sugar and therefore a smaller insulin response and less time out of fat burning mode.

This exaggerated insulin response impacts hunger and cravings too. Have you ever had a bagel or bowl of cereal for breakfast and then felt hungry an hour later? This is due to the blood sugar volatility unique to introducing carbs in the morning. We send our blood sugar on a roller coaster ride and insulin follows in the next car. As fast as they rise, they fall. Your body doesn't know exactly what has happened and all your body wants is to keep that blood sugar stable. It doesn't like the peaks and valleys. So, in attempt to get your blood sugar back up, it sounds the alarms of hunger and cravings. Most of us respond accordingly. We indulge those cravings. We grab a granola bar, a candy bar or a soda. Then the same thing happens. A fat loss nightmare that leaves you hungry and craving more carbs. This is what I call the carb cycle.

There's one more part of this equation that supports the carb backloading strategy and it has to do with the stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol compounds the fat storing potential of insulin. You really want to avoid having insulin & cortisol elevated at the same time. When is cortisol naturally at it's highest? Yup, in the morning.

Cortisol cycles through the day and is highest in the morning and lowest at night. This is part of your body's natural sleep/wake cycle. Cortisol peaks in the morning to help you wake up and feel alert. It is at it's lowest in the evening so you can relax and fall asleep. Consuming carbs in the morning puts your body in a situation where insulin & cortisol are high at the same time. Not good for fat loss.

So then what do we eat in the morning? There are so many options between proteins, fats & veggies. Some great breakfast options include:

- Bacon & eggs
- Omelets
- Frittatas
- Salmon
- Avocado
- Bulletproof coffee

Check out these posts & podcasts where I go into specific meal ideas & recipes for breakfast.

[How to make breakfast a fat loss meal](#)

[What is bulletproof coffee](#)

[Dos and Don'ts of bulletproof coffee](#)

## Moderating Protein

Let's first get clear on the fact that there is no such thing as a "free" food. Many people transition to a whole foods/paleo/primal approach and feel like they can eat unlimited quantities of food so long as they are "whole foods". This is not true. One of the biggest offenders in this situation is protein. You can overeat protein. You absolutely can. And I'd dare say that most people who transition to whole foods/paleo/primal do. This is why it is so easy to gain, or at least struggle to lose, weight.

When you consume ANY food in excess of your body's fuel needs, you will store the excess. It doesn't matter if it is salmon, chicken, Brussels sprouts or Twinkies.

Another point I want to make is about what happens to this excess protein we consume. Is there a storage form of sugar? Yes. Excess sugar is stored as glycogen in the muscles and liver and/or converted to fat and stored in adipose tissue if the storage space in the muscle and liver is full. Is there a storage form for fat? Yes. Triglycerides. Is there a storage form of protein in the body? Nope. So what happens when we consume more protein than the body needs? It is broken down and converted to glucose. What?! Yup.

So consuming more protein than your body needs for energy & repair is an absolute issue for fat loss. This is really a Goldilocks situation. Protein is essential. You need to get enough. You absolutely want to incorporate whole food protein sources with each meal. Protein is critical for immunity, energy, healing, hormones and much more. But most of us do not need double chicken on our Chipotle bowls or a 40g protein shake after a workout, especially when the goal is fat loss.

Now, I know you're probably wondering, "how much is too much? And how much is not enough?" Unfortunately, there is no hard and fast answer here. Anyone who tries to give you one is just guessing. YOUR body will help you find the right answer for YOU. It will depend on many factors including:

- How many meals do you eat? (Eating 3 meals + 2 snacks gives you different protein reqs per meal than if you eat 2 meals and no snacks)
- How active are you? And what type of activity? (If you are highly active or engaging in resistance training, your protein needs will be higher.)
- What is your body composition? (Individuals with a higher total body weight or more muscle mass are going to require more fuel than individuals with lower body weight or muscle mass)
- What works for you? (What satisfies your hunger? This will be different for everyone. What satisfies your cravings? What is giving you the best results?)

This goes back to why I so strongly encourage everyone to keep a simple tracking document. Finding the right answers for your body isn't that hard when you start paying attention. Start by incorporating approximately 4-5oz of protein with your meals. From there, monitor your progress (body weight, waist & hip circumference, progress pictures), hunger, cravings & energy. When you find the place where your hunger is satisfied, you have infrequent cravings, stable energy and you're seeing the fat loss results you want, that's your sweet spot. But, your sweet spot will change and you'll need to change right along with it.



## Emphasizing Fat

We do not need to fear dietary fat. It does not make you fat anymore than protein or carbs can make you fat. If you eat too much of it, excess will be stored. If you don't eat enough fat, you're setting yourself up for challenges as well!

People tend to fear fat because it contains more calories than protein or carbs. A gram of fat contains 9 calories whereas a gram of protein or carb contain only 4 calories. But fearing fat on that basis comes from a fundamental misunderstanding of calories.

Calories are a unit of measurement. They measure the energy potential within a food. So, this means that fat contains more than twice as much energy as protein or carbs! That's a wonderful thing! That means you can be satisfied for longer on less with fat than with protein or carbs!

Your body absolutely needs fat. It is required for hormone production, cognitive function, metabolism of vitamins and so much more. Fats are components of every single cell in your body. Every single cell! Do you realize that your brain is 60% fat?

Know what happens when you don't eat enough quality fat? Your body actually up regulates the activity of **fat storing** enzymes. Yup. Your body recognizes that more fat is needed so it's going to hold on tight to all that you have.

When you are consuming adequate healthy fats, your body down regulates these fat storing enzymes and up regulates **fat burning** enzymes. If you put fat in short supply by not eating enough, your body will compensate and be far less willing to release any stored body fat regardless of your calorie deficit.

Remember how we talked about your body having options when in a calorie deficit? It can either burn fat, burn muscle, lower your metabolic rate while creating a stress response or all of the above. **Not eating enough fat is one of the factors that will lead to either muscle burning or lowered metabolic rate instead of fat burning.**

### *What are Quality Fats?*

You want to emphasize fats from whole food sources. Remember that these fats aren't just providing energy to your body. These will serve as raw materials. Yes, your body will incorporate the fat you eat into your cells. So, if you eat processed, unstable, rancid fats, then the quality of your cells is compromised. The membrane of your cells will be made up of these highly unstable cells and therefore your cells are unstable. This is bad. This should be avoided.

You want to focus on quality, stable fats from whole food sources as much as possible. These fats include:

- Salmon (ideally wild caught)
- Avocado
- Beef (ideally grass fed)
- Coconut
- Macadamia nuts
- Almonds
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Butter (ideally grass fed)
- MCT oil

Of course this is not a comprehensive or exclusive list. Fatty cuts of quality meats also deliver healthy fats.

You'll want to avoid, as much as possible, trans fats, crop oils (canola, corn, etc) and fats within processed foods.

Remember, when you over restrict fat intake, your body will treat fat as a precious resource and be very reluctant to burn your stored body fat. Emphasizing quality fats will support fat loss, energy, hormone balance, focus, mood, skin health and much more.

## ***How Much Is Too Much?***

This is very much like the response to the same question with protein. This is going to depend on many factors including:

- How many meals and snacks you're eating
- Your body weight and body composition
- Your activity level
- How much protein & carbohydrate you consume
- The type of fat you're eating
- Your hormone balance

Start by incorporating 1-2 servings of fat with each meal and snack. Monitor your satiety, energy and progress towards your goals. Adjust up or down accordingly.

## Avoiding Over Restriction

All or nothing doesn't work. Perfection is not possible. You will have bad days & bad weeks. You might have bad months. The pursuit of perfection and the all or nothing approach backfire. Look back on your dieting past. How has over restriction worked for you? Is it sustainable?

There is a direct relationship between deprivation and temptation. The more severely you restrict, the more temptation you'll face. Heck, you'll probably be tempted by things you don't even really like just because you feel so restricted.

This is something Metabolic Effect calls the Banana Effect. Maybe you know someone who absolutely positively won't eat bananas because they have too much sugar but then they'll eat a pint of ice cream over the weekend or drink a bottle of wine. Or maybe someone who opts for dark chocolate as a snack because they think it's a "healthier" option but then they eat an entire bar instead of the single ounce they planned to eat. Or maybe you're like I used to be: you stock protein bars to help you avoid candy bars but you eat them in multiples.

We have to be able to recognize that those strategies aren't working. They often stem from one of the following issues:

- You aren't eating foods you love so you never feel truly satisfied
- You're over restricting in an unsustainable way

If you do not love chicken and broccoli, don't eat chicken and broccoli! Here's what you're risking when you eat foods because you think you should even though you don't like them. While you might be physically satisfied, you won't be psychologically satisfied. This is why you might find yourself cruising through the kitchen immediately after a meal looking for a snack even though you aren't hungry.

You should look forward to your meals. You should keep searching until you find fat loss friendly foods you love, enjoy and look forward to.

You also need to get really honest about whether or not your approach is working for you. If the protein bars lead to more protein bars, they are no longer serving their purpose as a healthy snack.

If you aren't willing to stop eating the chocolate after the first square, it's not working for you. Find another option.

There is something hormonal and physiological going on here also. It is called **cognitive dietary restraint**. When you over restrict, it creates a stress response in your body. This increases the stress hormone cortisol. Excess cortisol amplifies the fat storing effect of insulin while making you more hungry and making you experience more cravings.

Start experimenting with food to find the foods you love that love you back. Resist adopting any strategy that you won't be able to sustain for the rest of your life. Short-term strategies deliver short-term results. If you can't sustain the way you're eating, you won't sustain any weight loss it delivers.

Eat foods you love that love you back. You can't do that until you know what they are. Start by tracking. Identify first what is not working. What's not working might include things you don't like eating or things you like eating but tend to overeat, or both.

Here are some things to try as you work to find the foods you love that love you back:

- Bacon wrapped avocado slices
- Deviled eggs
- Sweet potato nachos
- Jicama fries
- Coconut cream with cocoa or cacao & stevia
- Baked apples with pecans & cinnamon



## More Fasting, Less Fed

Let's imagine you're going on a road trip. You start the road trip by filling up your car with gas. You get on the road with a full tank and after a mile or two, you see another gas station. You think, "Oh! Gas. My car likes gas. I'm gonna get some!"

You pull in and add more gas to your already full tank and the excess just spills out all around you. You get back on the road and not 5 miles later you see another gas station. You say to yourself, "Great! Another gas station. I should get some of that." Once again, you add fuel when fuel isn't needed.

Sounds silly, but that's what most people do to their bodies. They constantly add fuel regardless of the fact that they have a full tank already!

As we've already established, when you give your body more fuel (via food) than it needs, the excess must be stored. It can be stored as muscle or as fat but either way it spells weight gain.

Most people are overfeeding themselves. Period.

Your body can only be in one of two states at any given time. It cannot be in both. These states are referred to as fasting and fed or post-absorptive and post-prandial. Now hear me out while I explain. Please do not think I'm advocating fasting in the way you traditionally think about it. That's not what this is about.

Your body is either actively digesting, metabolizing, absorbing and storing what you most recently ate or it is in a post-digestive state where your last meal or snack is fully digested, stored, metabolized and absorbed. The first is an anabolic state or "storage mode". You cannot be in fat burning mode when your body is in storage mode. **When you are in this fed or post-prandial state, you cannot burn fat.**

When you are in a fasted state, the state where your last meal or snack is fully & completely digested, burned or stored, your body will have to meet your energy needs in other ways (burning stored body fat, for example). Unfortunately, many of you never allow your body into this state because you're constantly adding more fuel to the pipeline putting your body back into storage mode.

What if we only ate when we were truly hungry? And not at the very first sign of hunger, but what if we waited to eat until we really felt like our body needed fuel?

You do not need to fear hunger. It is not an emergency. You will not die if you get a little hungry. You do not have any less self-control or power of choice when you are hungry than you do when you're not hungry. Sure, you might be more practiced at over-indulging in the face of hunger but you don't lose the ability to choose wisely just because you're hungry. You just need more practice.

Obviously the size and composition of your meal or snack determines how long it will take your body to complete the fed/post-prandial process. A smaller meal or snack means a shorter amount of time in the fed state. A larger or more complex meal means more time in the fed state.

Do you need to eat less at each meal or snack? Do you need to snack with the frequency you currently are? Do you need to allow for more time between your meals and snacks?

Your tracking document, how you feel and your results have the answers to these questions so make sure you're keeping that tracking document each day!



## Sleep

Sleep is a major key to fat loss. This is about both quality and quantity of sleep. Let's first establish the impact of sleep on fat loss.

A recent study looked at two groups of individuals both on moderately (and equivalently) calorie restricted diets. The only difference between the two groups was the amount of sleep they got each night. One group got 5.5 hours and the other about 8.5 hours. Both groups lost weight. However, only 40% of the weight loss in the group getting less sleep was fat. The rest was water and muscle. What about the group getting 8.5 hours of sleep each night? 80% of the weight they lost was fat. Woah. Major. Sleep.

So what's going on here? How does sleep impact your body's ability to burn fat? It's all about those hormones, my friend. When you are even moderately sleep deprived, your body becomes more resistant to insulin. In fact, 4 nights of moderate sleep deprivation (getting about 5-6 hours of sleep each night) can decrease your insulin sensitivity by as much as 30%! That is major!

Now, what does decreased responsiveness to insulin have to do with fat loss? Remember, insulin is a storage hormone. A fuel delivery hormone. If you aren't responding efficiently to insulin, your body will produce and release more of it & it will take a longer time for it to do its job which means more time out of fat burning mode.

Plus, lack of sleep is a stressor on the body. The internal stress response triggers the release of cortisol, one of your stress hormones. Cortisol amplifies the fat storing effects of insulin and makes you more hungry and triggers cravings, especially for carbohydrates.

So how can we make sure we're emphasizing the quantity & quality of our sleep? Let me first suggest the obvious: turn off the TV and get off Facebook & Pinterest. They aren't worth it. You also want to make sure you're managing melatonin & cortisol. Melatonin is the hormone that helps us fall asleep and stay asleep while reaching the deep, restorative phases of sleep. Cortisol is a stress hormone that makes us feel alert and awake. These two work like a seesaw. When one goes up it pushes the other down and vice versa.

Have you ever had that "wired but tired" feeling at the end of the day? You're super exhausted but you just can't wind down enough to fall asleep? That is a sign that your melatonin-cortisol seesaw is out of whack. Cortisol is naturally highest in the morning (helping you wake up) and lowest at night (helping you relax) and melatonin is the opposite – lowest in the morning and highest at night.

There is a lot that we do throughout the day to mess up this rhythm. You'll want to minimize things like:

- Working out within a couple hours of bed (this can elevate cortisol)
- Eating within a couple hours of bed (eating can also elevate cortisol)
- Being on electronic devices before bed. (Their blue-light emissions suppress melatonin)
- Over-exposing yourself to light in the evening. (Your skin has photoreceptors and this unnatural light exposure suppresses melatonin)

You might want to consider getting black out curtains for your bedroom, removing constant sources of light (buttons, clocks, etc) and instituting a technology curfew.

At the end of the day, you might see it as a nuisance but if it helps you burn more fat and feel more energetic & rested, isn't it worth it?



## Affirmations

“You must learn a new way to think  
before you can master a new way to be”  
Marianne Williamson

Let go of the idea that you'll do what you can. It doesn't work like that. **You live into what you believe you are.**

If you spend your days telling yourself (and others) that you're fat, unmotivated and have no self-control when it comes to [insert food of choice], **you will live into that reality.**

I used to wonder how I could achieve financial and career goals but not weight loss goals, despite wanting them desperately. It was because I wasn't able to “do what I could” because I was automatically living into what I believed I was. Fat. A chronic dieter. Disgusting. An emotional eater.

You cannot create a positive life with a negative mind.

When you argue for your limitations you get to keep them.

This does NOT mean that you have to become all puffy clouds & marshmallows and tell yourself that you're fit & lean & sexy when you don't feel you are. You must begin to reshape your beliefs about who you are. You can do this without reciting lies or things you aren't yet ready to believe.

You see, you can't consistently make great choices when you believe that you won't. You can't become a lean, fit, healthy person when in your heart and mind you believe you are fat and incapable of lasting change. You can't exercise self-control when you don't believe you have any. You live into what you believe you are. So change begins & ends with what you believe to be true.

### *How to Change Your Self-Limiting Beliefs with Affirmations*

I didn't start by telling myself I was lean and only made healthy choices because those things weren't true. I was almost 350 lbs and I was routinely making awful choices. However, I could still create a new reality & empower myself to become something different.

When I noticed the negative self-talk, those self-limiting beliefs that reinforced the very behavior I wanted to overcome, I'd just replace them. I didn't feel like I could just turn those thoughts off, they were happening automatically for me at that point, so I'd simply acknowledge, “Oh. Here are those unsupportive thoughts that are only going to hold me back” and I didn't try to tell myself that they

weren't true (because they felt very true) but instead I just pulled out a little notecard on which I had written some affirmations and I'd read them aloud.

Here are my original affirmations. I still carry these note cards around with me. I have a copy in my car, on my desk, in my purse & a few other places. My affirmations have evolved, but here's what I started with:

- Every day I am getting leaner and stronger
- I bring passion and intensity to my daily workouts
- I am in control of my choices
- I practice self-discipline every day

Now they have evolved a little bit and I use different ones depending on the situation, but here a few that resonate with me most:

- I eagerly choose foods I love that love me back
- I am relentlessly positive
- I appreciate my body & all that it can do
- There is nothing I can't get better at

You'll notice that none of them are negative. None of them say "I never eat sugar" or "I refuse to talk negatively to myself". Why? Because when we focus on what we **can't** do or can't have, that thing becomes larger than life. We increase our focus on it. If you say constantly, "I never eat sugar", what are you always thinking about? Sugar!!! Instead, if you say, "I choose foods that make me feel great before, during & after eating", you're focused on those foods & not on sugar.

Make sure you can believe your affirmations to your core. Do not have too many. You don't want to read them like a list. Make sure you feel them in your heart and you are claiming them with intention, hope and true belief.

## Leisure Walking

You might be surprised to learn that leisure walking is actually great for fat loss even though it's not much of a calorie-burning activity. Why's that? Hormones & blood flow. Before I dive into an explanation of why this is so beneficial for fat loss, let's first establish what leisure walking isn't.

It isn't power walking.

It isn't speed walking.

It isn't jogging.

### **Faster is not better.**

In fact, when we go beyond a leisurely pace, we enter into the "chronic cardio" zone and that has a far different (and not beneficial) effect on fat loss. Chronic, steady state cardio like power walking, jogging, etc bring up your heart rate to a moderate range and can actually create a stress response (which impairs fat loss) instead of diminishing your stress response (which encourages fat loss).

No tracksuits allowed. No huffing and puffing. Strolling. Leisure walking. You shouldn't be getting winded. You should be able to easily carry on a conversation.

This slow-paced activity is a powerful way to lower cortisol, one of your primary stress hormones. When you lower cortisol, you decrease hunger and cravings while increasing energy, improving your mood and facilitating the release and burning of stored fat. This cortisol lowering effect is magnified when leisure walking happens out in nature.

Plus, leisure walking stimulates blood flow, of course. Most of us spend way too much time sitting down. We sit while we drive, often while we work and then we come home and sit some more. Most of us are really not facilitating optimal blood flow with our sedentary lifestyles.

Blood flow is essential for so many things (like, you know, life) including energy and immunity but it's critical for fat loss. When you are in a calorie deficit and your body switches into fat burning mode, that fat doesn't just spontaneously combust. It is burned via a fairly complex process. First, a specific hormonal environment (low insulin, high glucagon) allows stored body fat to leave the cell in which it is stored. That is just the first step. In order for the fat to be burned and not simply reabsorbed, it must successfully travel through the blood to another cell where it must be granted access. It enters that cell to be burned for energy and is only then gone.

If that fat burning process gets interrupted, the fat will be reabsorbed and though the process was initiated, it wasn't completed.

## *What is the Rx for leisure walking?*

As much as you can, as often as you can. The less time you spend on your butt, the better. Remember, this isn't "exercise" as much as it is "movement". At a minimum, get an intentional walk in every single day, even if for just 5 minutes inside your house. Become intentional about getting up and moving about as often as you can. Do not fall into the "faster is better" trap. That is not true and it can backfire due to the hormonal response.

Here are some ways you can incorporate leisure walking:

- Park further away
- Take the stairs
- Add 5 minutes of walking into your morning routine
- Get a treadmill desk
- Pace while you talk on the phone or browse Facebook posts

Leisure walking is going to improve your overall health & fitness while maintaining your mobility (use it or lose it!) and creating a favorable environment for fat loss.



## Sprinting

Do not panic. Do not skip this section and think, "I'm not fit enough to sprint". Pay attention to me for a minute: **sprinting is relative**. There is not some minimum required speed. **It is relative to the individual doing the work**. Sprinting also does not have to mean running. There are many ways to sprint at ANY fitness level and via many different activities other than running.

Sprinting means YOUR maximum effort for a short distance or time period. You can do high impact sprints or low impact sprints. All sprints will be short in duration and high in intensity.

Intensity is relative. Your high intensity sprint on a recumbent bike might be much slower than the next person's and **it doesn't matter**. My rowing sprint is much slower than my personal trainer's. It doesn't matter. It is my body's max effort for a short period of time.

### *Why Sprinting Works*

Sprinting is amazingly effective for fat loss. In fact, it is far more effective than "chronic cardio" or that moderate intensity, longer duration stuff. There are two primary reasons for its effectiveness:

- After burn
- Hormone response

There is an incredible after burn generated by sprints. It's often called excess post-exercise oxygen consumption or EPOC. Let me explain it with an example. Have you ever walked up a flight of stairs and then felt winded at the top when you weren't winded on the way up? This is EPOC in action. See, when going up the stairs your body needed more oxygen (for your muscles) than what you consumed via inhaling. At the top of the stairs, your body had to recover the oxygen debt you created on the way up. When your body has to recover this oxygen debt, that's after burn. Your body is working overtime after the activity is over to give your body what it needs. Your metabolism is increased for the duration of the after burn.

This after burn is one of the differentiating factors between chronic cardio and sprints or interval training. When you finish a chronic cardio workout (jogging, spinning, etc), the burn is over. Whatever calories you burned during the activity is all she wrote. There is very little after burn with chronic cardio.

With sprinting or interval training, the after burn is greater than the burn during the activity itself due to the excess post-exercise oxygen consumption. This means that your metabolic rate is heightened for anywhere from 6-48 hours after the workout is completed!

But that's not the only benefit! We haven't touched on the hormonal benefit. I already shared with you that chronic cardio can increase cortisol & trigger hunger and cravings. We don't see this with interval training and sprints. We do see a stress response, but from the acute stress hormones, adrenaline and noradrenaline. These short term, fight-or-flight hormones actually stimulate the release of fat from fat cells. This, combined with the EPOC effect, making sprinting incredibly effective for fat loss.

## *Sprint Intervals*

The goal of a sprint interval is to exert your maximum effort. For this reason, the intervals need to be short. You aren't pacing yourself. You aren't holding anything back. You are going for what represents all out, max effort for your body. Most people cannot withstand that for more than 30 seconds at a time. Much longer than that and you have to pace yourself. No pacing. Beginners might start with just 10-15 seconds.

From there, there are a couple ways to determine the number of intervals and the amount of rest time.

Tabata is one way to sprint. A tabata workout is 20 seconds on, 20 seconds off for a total of 4 minutes. If I were doing a tabata workout on a recumbent bike, I'd go all out effort for 20 seconds then rest completely for 20 seconds and then go again until 4 minutes had elapsed.

You can also sprint for a set period of time and then rest for however long you need to feel ready to go again. In this scenario, you let your body be your guide and rest until you feel you are recovered enough to give maximum effort again.

Or maybe you want to try defined work/rest intervals like 1:1 or 1:2. Tabata is an example of 1:1 rest. Your work periods and rest periods are equal. 1:1 rest could be 20 on, 20 off or 30 on, 30 off. Equal rest, equal work. 1:2 would mean that you are resting for twice your work interval.

You can also rest for as long as it takes your heart rate to drop down to a particular level.

The number of rounds you do depends on the length of your work interval and your overall fitness level. Remember, something is better than nothing. Two or three short sprints is better than no sprints at all!

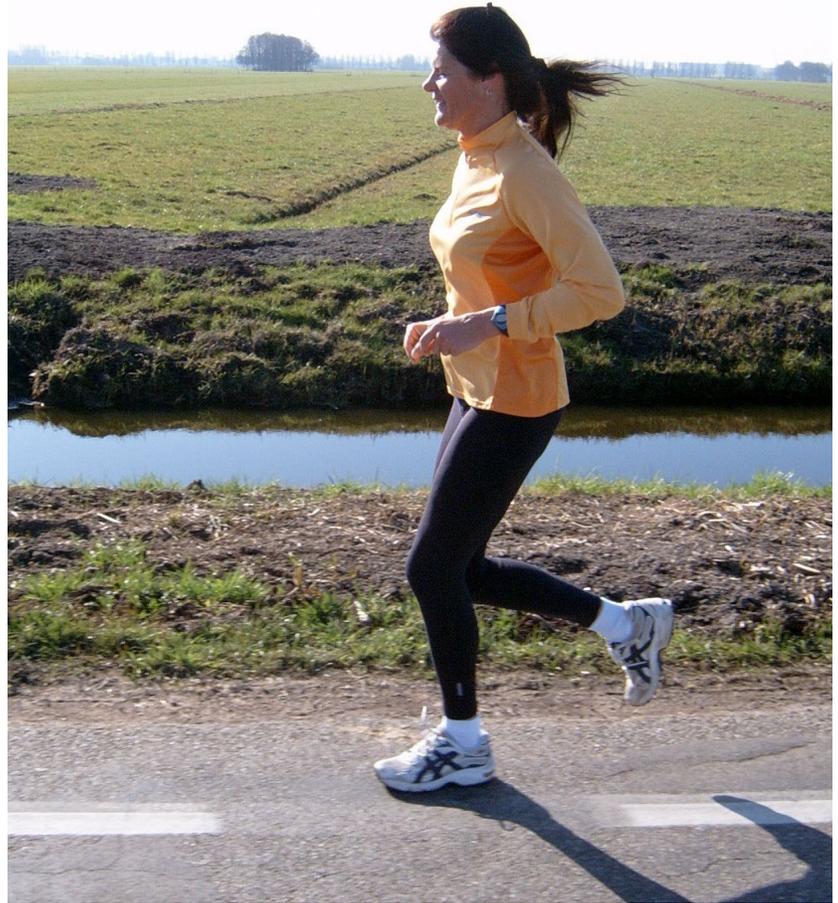
## *Types of Sprints*

Many people immediately tune out when I talk about sprinting because they can't or don't run. Or because they aren't fast. So what? You can sprint without running. And fast is relative. A sprint is just your fastest. I'm all about low impact sprints but high impact sprints are effective too. Here are some different ways you can sprint:

- Running
- Stairs
- Jump rope
- Rowing
- Biking
- Swimming

This of course is not an exhaustive list. You can pretty much sprint with just about any activity. It just means your maximum effort for a short period of time.

More is not more here. Your goal with sprinting is maximum intensity. You probably don't want to do these kinds of workouts more than a few times each week so that your body has adequate time to recover.



## The Big 2 Lifts

Very few people would argue that weight training isn't highly effective for fat loss. It absolutely is. I don't think I have to make that case here, so I won't.

Let me address one primary fear about lifting weights, especially about lifting heav(ier) weights: lifting weights does not make your muscles grow. Food makes your muscles grow. You will not put on muscle mass unless you are giving your body more fuel than it needs for operations. Exercise, including lifting weights, actually breaks down muscle tissues. The muscle can grow when it is given fuel beyond what it needs to stay the same. Food grows muscles. Not weights.

Now that we have that out of the way, we want to lift heavy things and do these two primary lifts for a number of reasons including what I think is the most attractive reason (literally): strength means tight & toned. Weight loss doesn't necessarily mean tight and toned. In fact, even pure fat loss doesn't mean tight and toned. Many people lose a lot of weight and still feel like they are flabby and don't look good naked. That can be rectified with proper weight training.

Plus, muscle is more metabolically active than fat. Yes, this means that you will increase your metabolic rate as you get stronger and strengthen those muscles. But that's not the only benefit. You see, many of your glucose transporters live in your muscle tissue. The more muscle tissue you have, the more glucose transporters you have and the more sensitive they are. What does this have to do with fat loss? Well, this means that your body will respond more quickly to carbohydrate consumption. Your body will require less insulin and the insulin will clear the sugar from the blood more quickly so you can get back to fat burning mode faster.

Unfortunately, many people waste their time with weight training because they don't apply enough stimulus (the weights they lift are too light) and/or they pick the wrong movements.

When it comes to weight training for fat loss, we want **maximum muscle recruitment**. What does that mean? It means we want to do the movements that engage as many muscles as possible at the same time. This way, we get the biggest bang for our buck.

We want to engage as much of the body as possible. That's why these two moves are incredible for results.

Weight lifting in general is about stimulus and response. The greater the stimulus, the greater the response. When you don't engage many muscle groups with a movement or you don't provide a significant stimulus to those muscles, guess what? You don't get much of a response.

Let's talk about **squats and deadlifts**.

These two power moves engage almost your entire body. What is the largest muscle in the body? Your glutes. Yup, your butt. Squats and deadlifts engage your glutes, your quads, your hamstrings,

your calves, your core, your back, your shoulders and your arms. Woah. That's about everything, huh? Yup, and that's exactly what we want.

Plus, they're incredibly functional. The deadlift simulates picking up just about anything off the ground. We do that daily. If we don't train those muscles, we'll gradually lose functionality as we age. The deadlift teaches you to engage your core and fire your glutes and hamstrings to lift while keeping your back tight and protected.

The squat. How functional is that? How often do we get up and down? There is nothing worse than pain every time you get up or sit down. We want to squat to strengthen those muscles and remain highly functional, balanced and agile.

Deadlifts & squats represent maximum muscle recruitment, stability, balance, strength and functionality.

Let me be clear, though. Form matters first, last and always. Do not attempt to lift even light weights without understanding the basics of form. Many personal trainers will offer a free introductory session. Take advantage of this to learn good form. Do not ever put yourself at risk for injury because you think it's self-explanatory. If you haven't yet been trained on proper form, you need to be.

You do not have to belong to a gym to squat or deadlift. First, master the movements with no weight at all. I do air squats (body weight squats) at the start of every day. From there, you can add weights via kettle bells, sandbags, barbells or dumbbells.



## Want to Learn More?

So, what did you think!? I hope you found these tips really valuable and I'd love to see you carry their implementation into the new year.

If you are ready to make your health a priority and start getting results, I'd like to make a few recommendations:

1. Get on the free Primal Potential email list. Each week I share tips, recipes, motivation and my personal workouts. Click here to jump on the [list](#)
2. Connect with me on [Facebook](#) and [instagram](#)! I'm always sharing my meals, my progress and my own mantras that help me stay focused and motivated
3. I'd love for you to join me for a [free webinar](#) where I'll get into specific mindset and nutrition strategies to take your results to the next level. Click here to grab your spot!

### Primal Potential Resources

- [Hormones & Fat Loss](#)
- [Fat Loss Fundamentals](#)
- [Fat Loss Food Guide](#)
- [Primal Potential Podcast](#)
- [Primal Potential Blog](#)
- [Free Primal Potential iPhone App](#)