



STRENGTH GUIDE

The 5 Fundamentals Of Fat Loss

By Eddie Perez



These recommendations are not intended for the treatment or prevention of disease, nor as a substitute for medical treatment, nor as an alternative to medical advice. Use of the guidelines herein is at the sole choice and risk of the reader.



INTRO

So before you read on I want to point out that there really only is one requirement for fat loss to occur, which is a calorie deficit. But, there are other key fundamentals that need to be in place for a successful diet. Because anyone can lose weight, but I'm assuming that you don't just want to lose any weight. Rather, you want to lose only fat, while maintaining your muscle, sanity, and most of all, you want to be able to keep that weight off. Keep in mind this PDF does not include tips or tricks of the trade, hacks, strategies, diet types etc. This is a fundamentals guide. This is designed to show you what's most important in a fat loss diet, details aside.

So while this PDF is far from in depth, it will provide you with the framework of what is required for a successful diet. You can then take this information and use it to design a diet for yourself, as well as seek out further knowledge beyond these basic fundamentals.

Please note that everything here is not made up. Rather, they are known fundamentals based on scientific evidence.

About Me:

My name is Eddie Perez, I'm the founder of Strength-Guide.com, which began on Instagram and recently also on Facebook where I talk about the science behind training programming, progressive overload, fat loss, muscle gain, and almost anything you can think of related to getting stronger and fitter. I am an ISSA Certified Personal Trainer (not that it's important or anything to brag about), but I have the certification nonetheless. I have been training for over a decade, with only almost the last 6 years with consistency; and only the last 4 or so years where I actually had a clue what I was doing. Even in the last 4 years, I have continued to grow smarter because I make an effort to never stop learning. I've made countless mistakes along the way and each has taught me a lesson. My goal is to provide you with the information I wish I knew 5-6 years ago when I started taking training seriously, so that you can skip the line and avoid the mistakes I and many others have made, or at least not make anymore going forward.

CALORIC RESTRICTION

The first and most important fundamental of all is a calorie deficit. This is the only thing REQUIRED to induce weight loss. However, that doesn't mean it's the only thing that's important.

So, what exactly is caloric restriction? This refers to the fact that you're eating fewer calories than your body needs to maintain homeostasis, or put simply, to maintain your weight. Our bodies use up calories when we're moving around, sitting around, exercising, and even sleeping. The simple act of being alive and everything we do in a day amounts to your total daily energy expenditure, known as TDEE.

How many calories we then consume in relation to that is termed "Energy Balance", which is the difference between our energy input (calories in), and energy output (calories out); also known as "Calories in vs. Calories out".

Without a calorie deficit, you won't lose any weight. It won't matter how clean or healthy you eat. Show me someone who is losing weight without eating in a calorie deficit and I'll show you someone who IS INFACT, eating in a calorie deficit. Sorry my friends, to lose weight you have to feed the body less. You may be able to manipulate carb, sodium, or water intake in the short term for water/glycogen loss, but it won't be fat loss. Now, this doesn't mean that we can just eat 1,000 calories

everyday and deem it “okay” because we’re in a calorie deficit. Very, and I mean, very (if any) people will need to diet on 1,000 calories to lose weight. Remember the part about only losing fat and maintaining your muscle? One study found that those who lost weight faster experienced less total fat loss (yes, LESS!), and actually lost some muscle; compared to those who dieted slower, who experienced more fat loss and gained a little bit of muscle.

You should diet on as many calories as possible while still losing weight at the recommended pace. Which based on 2014 paper titled “Evidence-based recommendations for natural bodybuilding contest preparation: nutrition and supplementation”, you should aim to lose between 0.5% to 1% of your bodyweight per week (if you want to maintain muscle and lose only fat), with the low end more ideal the leaner you become, and the high end if you have an average or slightly above average amount of body fat on your frame. I would caution against going faster than 1% of your bodyweight per week, unless you are obese and in serious health danger, in which then you can go as fast as 1.5% for a short period of time. But again, as you diet longer and longer and become leaner and leaner, you’ll want to reduce the size of your calorie deficit. Trust me on this; you’ll be a lot happier with the outcome of your diet the slower you go, not to mention a higher chance of keeping that weight off.

So what might this look like for an 180lb male looking to lose a bit of weight? That would be 1.8lbs of weight loss per week for the first few weeks. Once you start noticing your abs pop a little, or perhaps you’ve started to experience some extra fatigue in the gym, you can slow down your rate of weight loss to 0.9lbs per week.

So how does one create this calorie deficit? The first place you should turn to is your diet. This is where the majority, if not all, of your calorie deficit should come from. You should view calories burned from training as part of your total daily energy expenditure, and not as a time in the day to burn more calories above average.

So let's say hypothetically that you burn through 2,500 calories on average per day through everything that you do. You'll then want to create your calorie deficit. So if we start at a reasonable deficit, such as 20%, that would mean you are to eat 2,000 calories per day to induce sufficient weight loss. Now, if you happen to stall in your weight loss after a few weeks or months, you will have to reduce calories a little bit more to keep things rolling and further the deficit, or you can add in some cardio to further that deficit through the "energy-out" side of the equation.

Now, you don't have to track calories to make this happen, as there are many ways to hold yourself accountable and manage what you're eating to induce the amount of weight loss you desire; especially since you should be checking the scale a few times a week at least to track your bodyweight overtime. However, tracking calories is the most precise way of doing things, so that's what I generally recommend for most people who are up for the task, at least starting out.

Now that you know what a calorie deficit is and why it's required for weight loss, and so I don't drag this section on forever; let's move on to the next fundamental.

RESISTANCE TRAINING

The next important fundamental is resistance training. Mind you, these are not in any particular order. These fundamentals are all equally important and while a calorie deficit is the only one technically required to lose weight; to successfully lose as much weight as possible while maintaining your muscle, and having a higher chance of keeping the fat off post diet, you're best off making sure each of these fundamentals are in place. Everything outside of these is just icing on the cake; and that includes supplements, different diets, and any tips and tricks you might hear out there.

So why is resistance training so important? Because if you just put yourself in a calorie deficit and do nothing but sit on the couch, your body would have no reason to keep your muscle around, so it would be burned off along with fat tissue. This is true even if you exercise a lot but it being primarily aerobic training, or cardio. Now, if endurance is your main goal here, and you're not chasing a certain physique that is in any way shape or form; muscular, or toned (for the ladies), then you could technically lay off the resistance training some. But I would advise to keep at least "some" around for muscle maintenance purposes, healthy bones, and healthy aging.

What makes a body toned or muscular-looking after a diet is having a relatively low body fat with "higher than normal"

levels of muscle on your body. Muscle looks good; fat does not, in my opinion, and in probably yours too. Fat sits on top of the muscle so by removing some of it, your muscles will “pop”. So if you all of a sudden lost 10lbs of fat off your body right now and nothing else, you would look pretty good, provided you lift. Your muscles would pop more. But if you lose 5lbs of fat and 5lbs of muscle right this instant, well, most people wouldn't like that.

Lots of people who lift weights like to change up their training when they enter a diet. Like do higher reps, or circuit training, or do a bunch of cardio etc. But in reality, training shouldn't really change. When you enter a calorie deficit, the only thing that changes is your ability to recover from training. This means that over time if you start to feel more fatigued during training, it means your recovery abilities are reducing and so you should reduce your training volume, or the amount of sets that you do in your workout.

So while the size of your calorie deficit is important so as to help maintain muscle mass and gym performance; resistance training is also important during a diet as it is the trigger to keep muscle protein synthesis elevated and give your body a reason to keep the muscle around. Dieting is catabolic, so it suppresses muscle protein synthesis and increases muscle protein breakdown. Meaning, when you synthesize more muscle than you break down, you gain muscle, and the opposite if you synthesize less muscle than you breakdown. So the goal here is to maintain that balance during your deficit/diet. Resistance training is great for this.

PROTEIN INTAKE

Being in an energy or calorie deficit uses protein as fuel, which means less protein to help synthesize new muscle tissue. Like resistance training, protein is also a trigger to help keep muscle from being burned off during a weight loss diet. For this reason, protein should likely be a little bit higher when you're dieting opposed to when you're not. Somewhere around 1g-1.3g per pound of bodyweight is a good range (or 2.2g-2.8g/kg). This means that if you weigh 180lbs (82kg), you would need to consume between 180g-234g of protein per day. Yes, this is a lot. But if you are overweight I would pick your target weight and use that for calculation. So if you weigh 230lbs and hope to be 180lbs, you would calculate your protein intake off of 180lbs.

Why? Because we're mainly looking at lean body mass; so if 2 individuals have 150lbs of lean body mass, but one is 15% body fat and one is 35% body fat (weighs more primarily through fat); they technically both require the same amount of protein. Most research on protein is on non-obese individuals, so that's why we go by grams per pound (or kg) of bodyweight.

I would recommend most people start at 1g/lb and increase to the higher end the leaner one gets. The reason being is because as one gets leaner, the more the likelihood one loses muscle mass. In the beginning of a diet when there's plenty of fat to go

around, your body has no problem burning off fat for fuel if you're eating enough protein, lifting weights regularly, and eating a reasonable amount of calories (eg: the deficit is not too large). But, when body fat gets lower, your body has less fat to sacrifice and so the chances of muscle loss are greater.

It's important to note though, if you have a tool at your disposal that tracks your lean body mass; don't be alarmed when it decreases during your diet. Lean body mass is not the same as muscle, as lean body mass encompasses water, muscle, bone, and basically anything that isn't fat. So lean body mass losses are normal and should be expected in a diet. True muscle loss however is not the norm and would only be experienced if one is not following one or more of these 5 fundamentals listed in this PDF, or if one decided to get extremely lean, say for a bodybuilding contest. For most standard diets to get beach lean, summer lean, or to improve health or appearance, muscle loss shouldn't be a problem when doing things right.

Muscle is metabolically active, meaning by having higher amounts of muscle mass, you'll burn more calories by default, meaning you can eat more when you diet or just in general. Besides, the improved strength, agility, and appearance is cool too; so yay for protein and lifting weights.

Lastly, protein is very satiating. So if you compare 2 diets, one with 120g protein in it and one with 150g protein in it; the 150g protein diet is going to result in you feeling fuller, all else being equal (caloric intake, fiber intake etc). So if you're eating at 1g/lb for protein, are eating at a reasonable deficit, eating sufficient fiber (at least 25g per day), and prioritize healthy nutritious whole foods; yet you're always starving, try bumping up your protein a little bit closer to 1.3g/lb.

SLEEP

Ah yes, sleep! Everyone's favorite subject. Sleep isn't talked about nearly enough, especially for making gains or inducing fat loss. Why? Because it's not sexy to talk about, no one is going to sell you a sleeping program. But everyone these days is trying to sell you their booty program, or protein supplement, or special diet etc. No one likes to listen to subjects about sleep either because a lot of people have busy lives, schedules, kids, work, school etc. and so sleep is something that gets tossed aside.

I hate to get philosophical on you guys, but a lot of folks who state they don't have time to work out, or start that business they've always wanted (or whatever it may be), tend to blame time, or that they don't have enough of it. Many times one doesn't need to sacrifice sleep to get it done though, rather, leisure time. If you want to work out, or start that business, or simply get better sleep so you can make gains; then the first place to start cutting at is your leisure time. It's not about how much you sleep. It's about what you do when you're awake. In other words, you can be very productive, live a good life, and get everything you need to get done all the while having a solid night of sleep most nights.

Not to mention, better sleep yields more productivity and health.

So a recent systematic review looking at all studies on sleep and its effect on performance shows us that improving sleep from roughly 7 hours a night to roughly 8 hours a night resulted in improvements in athletic performance, as well as decreased sleepiness throughout the day, and lower fatigue levels. These fatigue reductions and improvements in performance will help you build more muscle because you'll be able to train harder, with more intensity, and lift more weight.

One study actually found that over a 2-week diet intervention with calories equated; those who slept on average 5hrs per night lost nearly twice the lean body mass than those sleeping roughly 7 hours per night. So it's not just performance, but sleep greatly impacts where that weight loss comes from (fat or lbm). You will lose more fat if you sleep enough and hold on to your gains better. It is true, lean body mass doesn't necessarily mean "muscle", but losing twice the amount is certainly a cause for alarm. Indeed, you can be doing everything right except sleeping enough and your diet success is going to be severely reduced.

Low sleep also increases ghrelin levels (a hunger hormone); making a diet harder than it needs to be. It also decreases levels of IGF-1 and testosterone, and increases cortisol levels.

Because of this study, my previous recommendation was to sleep at least 7hrs a night to ensure your efforts aren't undermined. But, because of the new systematic review that looked at several studies on sleep and performance, recovery, sleepiness, and fatigue. It seems that even improving your sleep amount from 7hrs closer to 8-9hrs shows improvements in all these things, so that's what I recommend.

Remember, you lift heavy weights day in and day out. To maximize adaptations and to ensure you get as strong and

jacked as possible; you'll probably need more than the average person who does not put his/her body through this kind of stress. So I would say that if you want to ensure "sleep" isn't holding you back at all, sleep between 8-9hrs per night. This probably means you should spend between 9-10hrs in bed every night, depending how quickly you tend to fall asleep.

Having a night-time strategy can help, like a dark room, and no phone about 30-min prior to bed time. Since laying in bed for 8 hours but only sleeping 6 doesn't count.

Now, maybe you're reading this thinking "pshh.. I sleep 5hrs a night and still get good gains", well I say to you this; if you're making good gains now, just imagine how many more gains you could be making if you slept more?

Yes, 8-9 hours is a lot of sleep, but that just means you'll have to kick ass even more when you're awake. Not to mention you'll have the energy to do it being so well rested and all. It's been many years since I've slept consistently 4 hours a night, and while I was functioning fine for the most part, it was a disaster the first couple hours. I could not focus, I was very tired, and I even fell asleep or almost would at times when I shouldn't have (like in a morning class or driving home at the end of the day). Not to mention I hardly lifted weights at this stage in my life, I mean could you imagine if I was? I can envision barely any gains, and barely any energy to sustain the intensity in the gym I need to progress.

Looking back in hindsight, I was a busy dude; still am. But, I could have easily slept more had I prioritized it. I actually use to nap for an hour some days, but even that's not ideal. So I implore to you if you hardly sleep at all to take a good look at your schedule, and what you spend your free time doing. I'm

willing to bet a lot of you can give up a few things to sleep some more. I promise you aren't missing out on anything. We humans need our sleep to be productive, to make gains, and for health. Just hustle hard when you're awake.

ADHERENCE

None of this stuff matters without adherence. You have to find a way to implement all these things in a way that is sustainable for you and your lifestyle. Everything has to be realistic, enjoyable, and flexible.

Realistic:

For resistance training, this means you need to set realistic expectations for yourself. Meaning, don't say you're going to go to the gym 5 days a week when you can realistically only make it most weeks 4 times. Doing so will make you feel bad when you miss that fifth day. Always think about fitting your training to what is sustainable in your life, not necessarily how much you want to train. Have a realistic plan, and stick to it.

Nutrition wise; regarding protein intake and creating your calorie deficit, it's the same thing. Don't force yourself into a diet that you can't stick to. These days, there are a million diets out there; low carb, high carb, low fat, high fat, intermittent fasting, ketogenic etc. Well do you know what all these have in common for weight loss? They all assist in creating that calorie deficit we talked about. Never forget this very important fundamental. So, my recommendation to you is to choose whichever diet YOU can stick to. Yes, learn and research about these other diets if you want but ultimately if you want to eat

all your calories in 2 meals, in 4, or in 8, is up to you. If you want to eat 50g of carbs only per day and eat higher fat in replacement and you can stick to that, go for it. If you prefer to eat higher carbs and lower fat, do that. Neither is superior; just choose what works best for you. Also, set realistic time frames for what you're after. After reading this far you should have a pretty good idea how long it will take you to lose the weight that you want to, so don't expect to lose 20lbs in 4 weeks. After all, this is a journey.

Enjoyable:

Why is enjoyment important? Because the more you enjoy something chances are the harder you'll be able to get at it and the more you will be able to sustain it. After all, if you aren't enjoying something? Why do it? So this even comes down to basic stuff such as choosing exercises that you like to do. If you hate doing barbell bench press well then don't do it, there are alternatives like dumbbells or machines. Granted, lifting weights is not easy and so don't expect it to always feel good lol, at a certain point you're going to have to get it done, regardless of how you feel. But for the most part you should be enjoying it, going to the gym should be one of your happy places, most of the time.

Let me make it clear though, while the process of dieting can be an exciting one; seeing changes on the scale, the mirror, and how your clothes fit. But, at a certain point hunger will catch up to you and it won't be all that enjoyable. I think most of us can agree that eating unlimited donuts is more enjoyable than dieting on low calories, at least in the short term. But, you should make your diet as enjoyable as possible. Not by eating sugary foods all the time, but rather by focusing on the process itself. Remember, you chose this.

Flexible:

Flexibility is required in order to make realistic and enjoyable even possible in the first place. Life happens, work happens, kids happen etc; so it's important to allow for flexibility to accommodate for these changes to continue making progress towards your goals.

What does this mean in practice? Well, let's say for example you've been having a tough day and don't have the energy to come in later and do your heavy squats you had planned. Rather than trying to get through it and risk injury, you could simply move that workout to the next day, or perhaps take the day easy by lifting with 20 less pounds. That's a real basic example but by thinking critically you should be able to adjust on the fly to almost anything.

Another example is let's say that you are dieting on 1,800 calories per day and you've been killing it lately. However, it's your best friend's birthday on Wednesday and he/she wants to go out to eat at a certain pizza joint. Well, some people would either not go (which is ridiculous, unless of course you can't make it, but it's ridiculous if you won't go because of your diet), or they would go but they would eat like crazy. Leaving them with feelings of guilt, not to mention a couple extra pounds on the scale the next morning. So what could one do?

A simple strategy is to use the borrowing method. Essentially, you borrow calories from other days to make room for another day. So let's say you're eating out Wednesday and you want to be able to eat more or less freely, well you could eat 200 calories fewer on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, leaving you with a total of an extra 600 calories for Wednesday. This won't

affect your progress as you're still consuming the same total weekly calories, pretty neat right?

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