

EVOLVING

ALPHA

BODY BLUEPRINT

To Insane Muscle Growth & Fat Loss

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Table of Contents

Introduction

CHAPTER 1: The Basics

CHAPTER 2: Let Go Of What You Think You Know

CHAPTER 3: Integrate The New & “Metabolic Flexibility”

CHAPTER 4: What Macronutrients Will You Thrive On?

CHAPTER 5: What Should Your Meals Look Like While Cutting?

CHAPTER 6: What Should Your Meals Look Like While Building Muscle?

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 7: To Track, Or Not To Track Calories?

CHAPTER 8: Non-Workout Day Nutrition

CHAPTER 9: Workout Day Nutrition

CHAPTER 10: Refeeds/Non-Tracking Meals/Days

CHAPTER 11: Carb Cycling/Carb Manipulation – Is It Necessary?

CHAPTER 12: Losing Fat & Gaining Muscle At The Same Time

CHAPTER 13: Intermittent Fasting & Fasted Training

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 14: Gut Health For Maximum Absorption To Fuel Muscle Growth

CHAPTER 15: Hormone Health For Maximum Gains & Better Fat Loss

CHAPTER 16: Training Fundamentals & Vital Keys

CHAPTER 17: How Should You Structure Your Training Protocol?

CHAPTER 18: Supplementation

CHAPTER 19: FAQ's

Resource Section

Introduction To The Evolving Alpha Body Blueprint To Insane Muscle Growth & Fat Loss

My name is Fraser and what you are about to read is my complete guide to kicking ass, taking names, building muscle, and getting super lean all on a Vegan Plant Strong diet.

Yep, you heard it right. I am going to dive deep into plant-based nutrition and training, not just for optimal health, but for maximizing muscle growth and fat burning potential (without too much science and with more applicable, practical steps you can implement TODAY)

Practical application is one of the biggest barriers for so many people. They want to experience the Evolving Alpha life, but they feel stuck. With a real lack of clear-cut steps and protocols in regards to what to eat, how to train and live for maximum body composition results – it can be the ONE thing that prevents people from ever trying this.



Every day I receive messages from people saying,

“Fraser, I really want to try a plant-based vegan diet, BUT I just don’t know where to begin. I don’t know what to eat. Will I even be healthy? I’m worried I will lose muscle and gain fat – it all seems so confusing, HELP!”

So it’s about damn time I do something about this. Because for a long time I would just link them a couple of recipe blog sites and give them some basic tips, which I know most probably never did ANYTHING with. Why? Because it was impossible for me to reply in depth to each person and the blogs/recipes were often too general. Simply too vague.

In reality that was all the resources I could find available floating around about this subject.

People want to SEE others who have gotten amazing results through a plant based diet and want to emulate what they did.

So this is my Evolving Alpha Body Blueprint for everything muscle growth, fat loss, and strength related. So you CAN thrive on a plant-based diet, witness your strength go through the ROOF, along side muscle gains and easier, more sustainable fat loss.

That is a PROMISE.

So let’s get into this.

But first off, this book is geared towards two kinds of people. The first group is curious non-vegans who are desperately interested to achieve massive results on a plant based diet, but just do not know how. The second groups are the current vegans who either want to up their game more or really dial in their nutrition and training so they can become a walking plant strong billboard for this amazing lifestyle. This is not a done-for-you guide, this requires you to do some work. Remember anything worth achieving in life is NOT done-for-you. It requires WORK.

So let’s make this work for you.

The first thing you need to realize is, this book isn't going to be laced with science and technical jargon, it's also not going to be laced with training programs and recipes. YES, there is a time and place for that, but in this book my goal is to give you real, tangible, *simple* steps that you can use to incorporate your own food choices and exercises into a plan of your own to CRUSH it.

It's not rocket science, once you have the framework (which this book is) you can fill the body of that frame out with the right kind of nutrition and training for you, which I will give suggestions for in the book.

If you want more science referenced material just check out the book "The Complete Idiot's Guide To Plant-Based Nutrition" by Julianna Hever. Great book and breaks down all the science around plant-based nutrition. So couple that book, with this one, and you have ALL the tools you need.



For additional assistance and more detailed plans and nutrition visit the store on my website www.EvolvingAlpha.com and upgrade to get more help, like our Vegainz 12 Week Muscle Builder or custom plans.

CHAPTER 1: The Basics

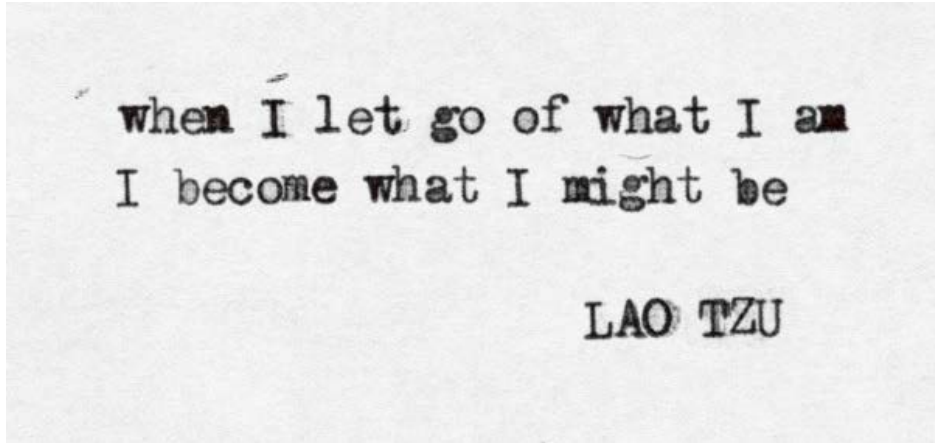
#1 Break The Subconscious Programming (The Art Of Letting Go)

How many times have you heard someone say things like –“I feel I need the eggs for the protein” as a reason to have eggs in their diet.

Or, “I’m a raw till four vegan” – labeling and bracketing themselves in a small niche, which in reality just binds them to ONE system, without ever considering expansion beyond that one path.

The key here is to LET GO. To drop all the “What’ If’s”, “hems and haws”, the constant data mining of ridiculous forums and blogs online that all contradict one another leading you to an utter state of stupefied confusion, which achieves absolutely nothing. Sound familiar?

As a former butcher and avid meat-eater in my former life, I had to practice this art of “Letting Go” to the fullest. I had been so indoctrinated into a certain way of thinking (we all have), so conditioned to think we NEEDED animals for protein (or that we need tons of plant-based protein if you are vegan already) that I was scared and uncertain that change was even a good thing.

A quote by Lao Tzu: "when I let go of what I am I become what I might be". The text is in a typewriter-style font, with some words in a slightly different, bolder font. The quote is centered on a light background.

when I let go of what I am
I become what I might be

LAO TZU

So let go of what you think you know and realize some of our best teachers are through our own EXPERIENCE, not reading other peoples theories and experience.

Let me ask you this. Are you truly happy with your current results?

How you FEEL, how you sleep, how you look, your energy levels, your strength, your stamina, your productivity, your recovery.

Are you ACTUALLY happy with those things?

I ask because those things are a BYPRODUCT of what your current routine, beliefs and habits look like RIGHT NOW. So, if your results aren't where you want them – it is about letting go of those old routines, to make way for new, fresh, vibrant strategies that will yield a different result.

What I am about to share with you flies in the face of conventional bodybuilding and will have you questioning everything you have ever done to get in shape. If you feel this way – GOOD, the book has hit the mark.

So, it's time to make the mental shift.



If you are a current vegan trying to take things to the next level – let go of what you think is right and wrong and start with a clean slate. So often I see vegans who are so stuck in their ways, that all fat is bad, or ‘xyz’ is not good for you, or that I need to eat a 80/10/10 macro split and so on.

Who made these rules up?

Why are you following something to the letter just because someone else said it was good? THINK for yourself and let go of all the clutter around plant based eating you’ve accumulated since you became vegan.

The same goes to the non-vegans looking to up their game. Let go of what you’ve been taught about protein, minerals, vitamins and macronutrient splits for bodybuilding and become a STUDENT again.

This book will be one of the best teachers you ever have, but you have to get back to being a receptive student - not a paranoid, know-it-all, skeptic.

Start fresh. Breathe and know that you can do this. You’ve got this. 😊

#2 Start With 1 Meal A Day If Need Be - Integrate

When implementing better habits, foods, and recipes, it all depends on where you currently are with your focus, discipline, goals, and motivation.

If you have a grasp over the food, then you can change everything up quickly and incorporate big changes in a short time. Alternatively, if this is foreign to you or you are trying to get a feel of how your body handles the new foods – then integrate.

Add a meal in each day, two meals, three meals and build on it.

It's what I did to begin with.

I built my confidence up around each meal and kept adding good, clean plant fuel in, to the point I had completely changed my whole eating routine, with very little stress or anxiety.

That is the goal! To control stress, control anxiety, have fun with this, flourish, build muscle, get lean and show the world!



#3 Find 2-3 Simple, Staple Meals You Can Add In – Practice & Mastery

Initially to keep thing simple, I often suggest to master 2-3 quick, easy, nutrient-rich meals that you can prep ahead of time if need be and heat up quickly.

I will give you some examples for these later in the book, but the key is routine, simplicity, and building a new set of habits around 2-3 new plant based meals you enjoy. Don't worry, I will show you how to do this.



#4 Find Good, Plant-based Protein Sources You Can Switch In For Animal Ones – Filling The Gaps

As you eliminate either processed junk vegan foods or animal products it is imperative that you add in amazing, new foods to fill those old voids. People relapse and mess up when they remove things, hoping they have the willpower to fight it without the additional of any new, good foods– then when they cave in, they wonder what went wrong.

I will tell you what went wrong. You didn't fill the old voids. You didn't bridge those old gaps, so when you remove anything from the diet that I suggest shouldn't be there, it is our goal to find an epic replacement, that not only tastes better, but yields amazing results when it comes to your body. So let's begin bridging the gaps in this book.

#5 Give Your Body A Chance To Adapt – Digestion, Sleep and Focus

Depending on what your diet looked like before – give the changes time. I cannot STRESS that enough. Are you a quitter? NO! So don't be one of those people who throws in the towel on the first day because your old routine has been challenged.

Too many people do that, but you AREN'T one of them, it's why you are reading this right now.

You may notice some bloating, or constipation – but at the same time you may notice none of these. All I can say to you is give the body TIME to adapt and optimize. Often we've been doing sub-optimal things for MOST of our lives so experiencing adaptations in the body in the short term is just a step on the path to building tons of plant strong muscle and shedding fat so much easier than you ever thought.

#6 Listen To The Biofeedback (Your Body Speaks To You, But Do You Listen?)

This is a term I love.

Biofeedback.

It is your body's language and it SPEAKS to YOU! Most people have no idea and just go on about their day, with their body screaming at them. It's why many people's results suck. They have no muscle and cannot burn fat because their body is so unresponsive.

So how do we make it more responsive?

We have to learn the language of biofeedback – which is what I will teach you in the later chapters of this book.

This will change your life. Change how you see progress and totally optimize and maximize your results FAR beyond any diet you've done before.

#7 Initially Don't Focus As Much On Macronutrients – Focus More On Total Calories Till You Calibrate (Focus On Detail Once The Foundation Is Laid)

This has to be one of the most fundamental steps to you breaking away from your old thinking. In the early stages of this transformation you need to stop obsessing over macronutrients (Protein / Carbohydrate / Fats).

Why?

Because a bodybuilding vegan macro breakdown is SO vastly different than any meat-eating diet you will ever see or even many mainstream vegan macronutrient breakdowns.

Often those ideal macronutrient splits pivot around high protein, moderate fat and low carb. I did that for YEARS and I wish I had known what I am about to

share with you in this book, back then. It would have changed my life and the way I see food.

It really is about letting go of 'ideal macros' that may have yielded some results in the past, but now giving your metabolism time to get a 'feel' on how it responds to these new calories and macronutrient splits/ratios.

THEN you can dive deeper and dial it in further. The first step is to just track TOTAL calories, even for a couple of days. I stress this to all the people I help.

*FOCUS MORE ON TOTAL CALORIES FIRST. THEN DIAL
IT IN WITH MACRONUTRIENTS A LITTLE LATER*

You want to succeed and crush your former results as an Evolving Alpha vegan? Then listen to what I say and do it, and I promise you it will pay off big time.

#8 Calibrate Your Metabolic Capacity (Understanding Your Engine)

There are 2 ways that you can do this. I'll explain them here as Option A and Option B:

OPTION A: If you *don't* like counting calories – The base your eating around the recommended portion/volume sizes and then assess how your body changes. Keeping a journal of how you look and feel is a great idea. The changes you experience will dictate how you handle certain calories and nutrients and then you can adjust your meal plan from there.



OPTION B: Eat as you *normally* would (without changing anything or trying to 'be good') for 2-3 days and *track all of your calories* – use an online calorie calculator such as calorieking.com to look up the calorie content of foods without a label. You *only* need to track the number of calories for the serving size you ate, *no other macros!*

From those 3 days of food journaling, figure the average number of total calories eaten each day. Here's how to do the math:

Day 1 total + Day 2 total + Day 3 total = Grand Total

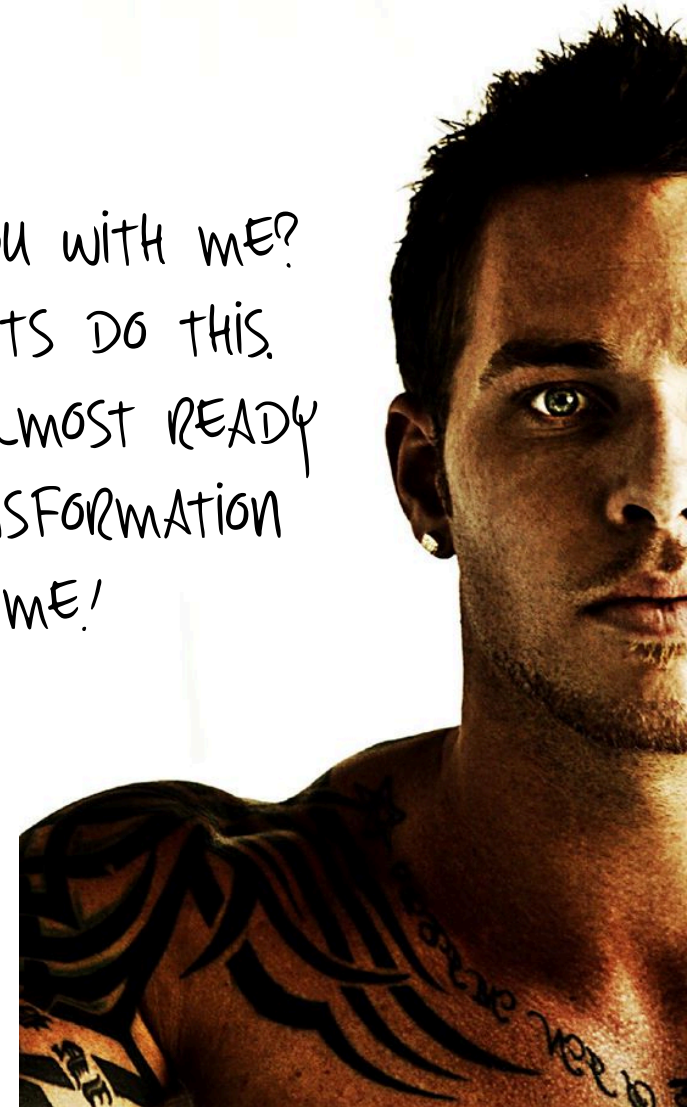
Grand Total ÷ 3 = Average Daily Calorie Consumption

Now, substitute in new, better plant foods that meet that SAME caloric intake first, before adjusting it up or down to suit your goal.

This all backs off the previous statement about not focusing on macros first, but TOTAL calories. People often think you NEED to count calories and/or macros to get in great shape, but it's simply not true. By being consistent with your food choices and subtly adding in, or removing calories after a few days/weeks you can get a very clear picture of how your body responds, which allows you to dial your conditioning in just like you would have, had you counted calories.

The idea of all of this is to assess your metabolic capacity around the new kinds of foods, and combining that with understanding your own unique biofeedback to then determine what kind of foods you tend to respond best too. It's a recipe for insane muscle growth and fat loss, but there is an assessment stage so you have to get focused and let go of all the old baggage and beliefs in order to really change your results.

SO ARE YOU WITH ME?
IF SO, LETS DO THIS.
WE ARE ALMOST READY
FOR TRANSFORMATION
time!



CHAPTER 2: Let Go Of What You Think You Know

(Protein, Amino Acids, Vitamins/Mineral, Normality)

This is the MOST important part of the book so do not overlook it!

Now, I'm not going to bomb you with too much science, research, and reasons to believe me or what I am going to share. This book is based on my own experience, through years of trial and error – coupled with many people whom I have also helped transform.

Whether you apply this or not, is up to you.

However, the goal of this book is to create something that is simplistic, implementable, and

easy to read. I always say there is a time for science and there is a time for practical, simple steps.

You HAVE to let go of all the technicalities and intense number crunching that so many people lose their minds in once they pursue their ultimate body.

What I mean by that is all the pointless stress around protein intake, amino acid combining, and vitamin/mineral deficiencies. If you want to hear it all debunked read the book I recommended at the very beginning, and it will paint a very clear picture that you have nothing to worry about.

I know most of you will understand this and agree, but this message is just there for the new people who are still learning about plant-based nutrition.

Realize that we have all been conditioned to feel like we need to have everything just perfect before we can begin. That idea of perfection is a goddamn illusion and it's also a mask for procrastination. I never knew someone who procrastinated who had achieved greatness in that area of their life.

So recognize that in yourself and call yourself out when you find your mind coming up with reasons to give up or go back to old habits. You know you can do better. You are worth more than that – so begin acting like it.

My goal here is to cut through that mind-clutter and give you fundamental tools & steps to build insane muscle fast and shed fat easier than ever before - and it all begins by letting go of the concerns and just learning through the experience!

SO HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO BUILD MUSCLE?

The research is varied but it can be anywhere from 0.7g/kg – 0.9g/kg depending on how advanced the person is. A LOT of non-vegans stress out about this so much when it comes to making the change to veganism. I hear this one all the time, and I even used it myself for many years.

My first suggestion is to just make sure you consume enough calories, first. Now everyone will be slightly different, but do not let some protein requirement on a piece of paper stop you from dialing this in, experimenting, and getting it right for you. Very often if you are eating enough calories and a range of good plant based sources like I will suggest in this book, you will inherently get enough protein for muscle growth. Couple that with the right kind of training, sleep, and lifestyle choices and you will see huge changes.

The reality is that no one can ever know for sure if something will work for YOU, unless YOU do the damn thing. So stop doing what most people do - quit assessing, quit data mining, quit reading forums, quit the “hem and haws”, quite the ‘what if’s” and START.

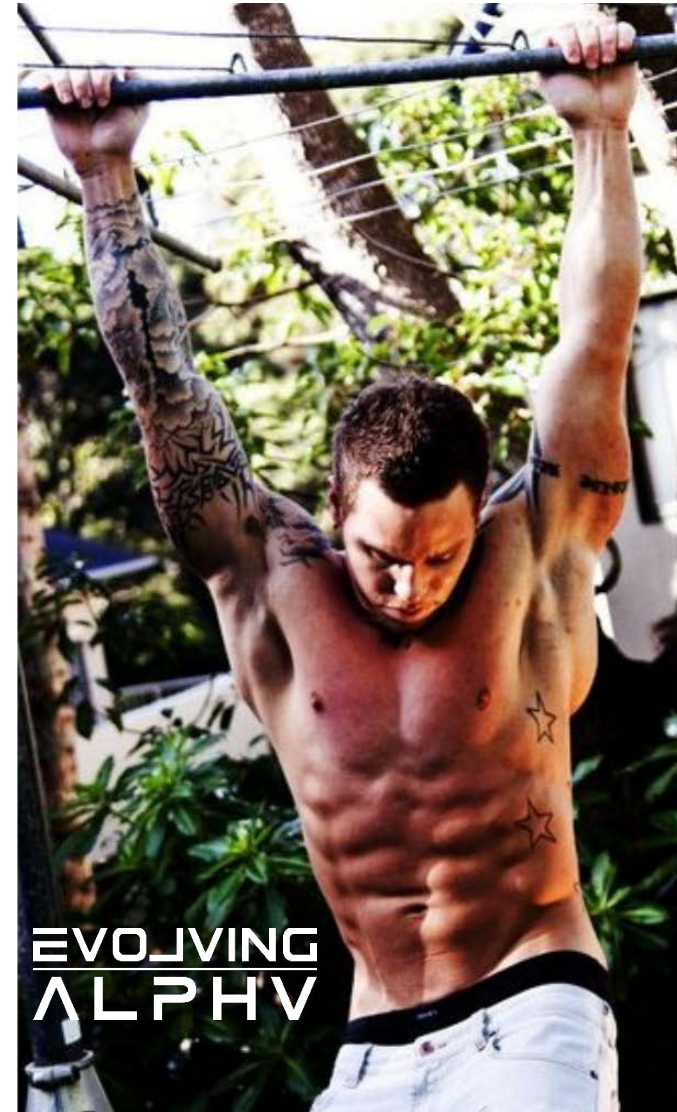
You will learn as you go and that is the best thing you can do. This book is your go-to tool on making this work for you!

Refine this as you learn.

Get your MIND RIGHT..

Now we get into the tangible stuff.

Here we go. This is where the steps begin.



CHAPTER 3: Integrate The New & “Metabolic Flexibility” (Test Your System & Biofeedback)

Step One.

Testing Your “Metabolic Flexibility”

What is metabolic flexibility? It is a term I use to describe how your metabolism reacts not only to different food sources, but how well it handles calories.

For example...

You might have Sally who is a 40yr old mother of 2 teenage girls. She is vegan and has a real interest in being the strongest, fittest person she can be. She

is currently about 25% body fat and has some mild estrogen and thyroid issues, which can break up her sleep patterns.

On the other hand you have Dave who is 25 years old has more muscle mass and is around 15% body fat. Dave doesn't have any known hormonal issues and sleeps well.

Now, if I gave both of these people 2500 calories of plant fuel per day, their bodies would handle the nutrition VERY differently. Dave might even lose weight depending on how active he is. Where as Sally could possible gain body-fat.

It all comes down to metabolic flexibility, which I consider to be the following factors combined:

Total Body Weight	Body Fat %	Previous Dieting History
Hormonal Imbalances	Sleeping Patterns	Activity Level (Physiological Stress)
Mental Stress	Total Calorie Consumption	Kinds of Food Options
Portion Sizes	Allergies	Gut Health

We will dive into these factors in later chapters, but for now, just work with the basics.

Now, the way to know how your metabolism works is to literally TEST it by eating an approximate 'maintenance' calorie intake. If your weight drops your metabolism is higher than your estimated intake, if your weight goes up your metabolism cannot handle all the excess food – so you then adjust accordingly based on that primary response.

There is no tick sheet you can check off to know for certain how your physiology will handle calories and different foods. So how do we figure this out?

Where do we begin?...

We begin with biofeedback cues and it goes like this:

Biofeedback is your body's silent language, sending you signals. They can be subtle or painfully obvious, but when I teach you how to interpret those cues, it is going to help you figure out what food sources are the best, most synergistic ones with your metabolism and physiology, and which ones are slowing your gains and fat loss.

TRUST ME, "CALORIES IN" VS. "CALORIES OUT" DOES MATTER – EAT TOO MUCH OF ANY FOOD ABOVE AND BEYOND YOUR METABOLIC NEEDS AND YOU WILL GET FAT. BUT THE KIND OF CALORIES / FOOD SOURCES ALSO MATTER JUST AS MUCH !

The types of foods we eat exert a hormonal response in the body. For example 100 calories of a sugary processed vegan donut, pizza or marshmallows will exert a massively different hormonal response than 100 calories of fresh peas, quinoa or spinach.

Yes, they are the same caloric total, but the biofeedback and hormonal response from both will be vastly different. Biofeedback is important because we can figure out which foods we perform best on. From there you can dial it in more and more, maximize your gut health and absorption rate of those foods, which in turn, maximizes your body's nutrient uptake to muscles and the ability to mobilize fat stores as energy.

This is how I read my biofeedback:

1. What do my energy levels feel like out of 10 before I eat?

(1 being utter garbage and 10 being so pumped up I want to run down the street, naked.. screaming! – Well maybe not that extreme, but you get the idea!)

2. What do my energy levels feel like 60-120mins after I eat?

Here are some biofeedback markers to interpret both questions with:

- Do you feel more lethargic/tired now than before you ate?
- Do you get brain fog after you eat?
- Bloating and gas? Is it minimal or normal for you? Or do you feel more bloated than normal?
- Have you noticed any skin rashes or facial break outs around certain foods you eat?
- Is your sleep better or worse with certain foods? And if you eat late is your sleep worse?
- Do you feel more hunger/cravings after you eat? Or feel comfortable and in control?

This is how I read my biofeedback:

3. When it comes to performance in the gym, muscle building, and fat loss...

- Is your strength in the gym up or down?
- Is your stamina and endurance up or down?
(If it peaks and troughs then the key is to look at how you ate the day prior and/or during the day of that workout to determine what you did right and wrong)
- Are you getting good gym 'pumps' (lots of blood into the muscles) or do you feel flat and more cold than normal?
- Do you feel like your nervous system is struggling to recover? Signs will be aching joints/tendons, poor sleep, low mood, lower strength, lower endurance like suggested above.
- Are you training in a fasted state?
- If not what do you eat/what kind of foods/portions before you train?

The key here is to synergize your biofeedback from your nutrition and sync it with your training performance. Example:

On a poor training day, where I felt weak and tired. I looked at my nutrition the day prior. I realized I had eaten some foods that normally aren't in my protocol (like vegan chocolate or bean chips) and my meals were quite large, which I also ate slightly later than normal. Which effected my digestion and blood supply to my organs, brain and muscles – subsequently impacting my sleep pattern too. So it was like a cascade effect starting with the different foods and meal timings that then triggered poor sleep and subsequently a poor workout the following day.

On the other hand -

On a day where I felt strong, full and energetic, I reflect back and I ate lots of whole plant foods, rice,

beans, an array of vegetables, Falafels, potato, peas and so on. Clean fuel in essence and in slightly smaller portions too. I also didn't eat too late at night and I slept well, not waking up as much during the night.

Now can you see how the synergy of what we eat, the food choices we make and even the TIME we eat can cascade over to how we perform in the gym - which leads to either a quality training session congruent with massive muscle growth and fat loss, or a session congruent with nervous system burn out, lethargy, and missing the mark.

Then, often what happens is the person blames the diet, saying it just didn't work for me. NO, the diet does work you just didn't interpret your own biofeedback, and you were doing the wrong thing for YOU. The fundamentals DO work, you just need to make the minor changes needed to suit your own physiology, which many people overlook. It's that simple.

It is also an advantage! Because when you do this, you unlock muscle growth and fat loss that most people feel is impossible. You now know a secret they do not!

THIS is why learning your own feedback matters.

At the end of this chapter is a biofeedback chart I use in my “Vegainz 12 Week Muscle Builder” program. It is an assessment tool you can use to figure out if your food choices are optimal for you and finally, if it is maximizing your gym efforts and if not, what switches do we need to make to optimize how you work.

Plot your numbers on the chart AND write in any notes worth mentioning for each day, such as:

- You slept poorly because your dog kept waking you up, which explains your low energy levels at the gym
- What meals you had during the day so you can look at how those food choices impacted the numbers on the chart

You can begin to see trends around which foods seem to elevate your energy and output, or decrease it. You can see how good sleep or poor sleep impairs certain aspects of your physiology. Maybe your mental stress contributed to cravings you had that day? Or maybe you ate a large meal too soon before bed and your sleep was poor with overworked digestion?

This is what biofeedback is and it is KEY in transforming your body and your life.

Why does all this matter? Let me recap one more time to emphasize how important this is.

If you are serious about maximizing your results in the gym, you HAVE to master the basics first. Those basics are learning the cues around your biofeedback. Understanding how different food choices impact your body. Understanding how portion sizes can also impact your digestion and blood supply. Understanding that eating certain foods at specific times can exert a different hormonal effect and create a different biofeedback.

So pay close attention in the coming weeks to how your energy feels. How your sleep, your focus, your strength, digestion, endurance, and recovery all feel.

What it means is, you need to be open to change the kinds of foods you eat (from white beans to chickpeas for example), when you eat them (instead of eating at 8pm eat at 6pm), and how much you eat (smaller or larger meals), play with your 'fasting/fed window' and change your perceptions to mental stressors in your life - to maximize your own potential.

So be okay with changing up your routine. If it means more muscle gains and easier fat loss it's worth it!



SUMMARY

It is important to monitor the integration of new foods, which we then assess through biofeedback - if they are maximizing our physiology or hindering the gains. Through that biofeedback we can then get a feel of how our metabolism handles food/calories and dial it in so we can maximize nutrient uptake, recovery, and strength - which will all help with insane muscle gains and effortless fat loss.

I will break things down in the coming chapters on how to manipulate the food choices and portions, so if one food group or meal combination doesn't maximize your biofeedback, we will keep changing it, till we find ones that DO.

It's called process of elimination and if you are serious about your goals just see it all as mastery. Mastering the Art of 'Yourself'.

People who want quick, yet transient results - just want a cookie cutter model diet they force themselves through, to cross a 'finish line' and go back to their old ways. People who want the best, who want to become a walking plant strong billboard, will be okay with trial and error and learning through the mistakes to really unlock massive potential.

So be the latter and let's do this.

VEGAINZ BIOFEEDBACK CHART

*** On a scale of 1-10 rate each category as accurately as you can. 1 being Very Low/Very poor - 5 being average – 10 being perfect/the best

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1) Sleep							
2) Energy Levels							
-Morning							
-Lunch/Afternoon							
- Evening							
3) Concentration							
-Morning							
-Lunch/Afternoon							
- Evening							
4) Strength							
5) Endurance							
5) Gym "pumps"							
6) Cravings/Hunger							
-Morning							
-Lunch/Afternoon							
- Evening							
7) Digestion/Bloating							

Notes/Details:

Record your food choices and what times you ate so you can cross reference your meals with your biofeedback.

CHAPTER 4: What Macronutrients Will You Thrive On?

(Your Optimal Ratios)

This is a point of discussion where the breakdown often happens and uncertainty sets in. People get really confused over the right kind of ratios of macronutrients for them. To the point that people either give up and resort back to a vegan junk food diet (or their old diet that didn't work for them), or going back to animal products. None of which will benefit you in the long term.

So let's finally make this work for you. Are you with me? You better be! Because I've got your back and it's time to get really CLEAR about what works for you.

Let me just clarify for those who don't know -

There are 3 macronutrients: protein, carbohydrate, and fat. These three macronutrients make up your diet or total calorie intake. Within the vegan community there is so much added confusion around concepts like '80/10/10', Raw till four, fruitarian, high carb, high fat and so on.

I'm not going to bore you with all the variations, but what I will say is – people make the fatal mistake of pigeonholing themselves into one label and think it's the ONLY way to eat or live. **WRONG**. Drop the pigeonhole mentality, and realize that there is no set ratios for anything - that your unique metabolism and life will respond to varying degrees of foods and ratios and there is a trial and error component within this.

So how do you know what works for you? How do you know if you should eat more carbs, less carbs, more fat, less fat? What are YOUR optimal ratios?

This is where you begin. So follow me closely.

There are a few factors to consider, such as...

How much volume of food do you mind eating? For example if your diet is higher in carbs you will eat a larger volume of food than if your diet were higher in plant-based fats. For some people that is great, they love eating large portions of food. For others they don't like that overly full or semi-bloated feeling that can come with larger meals.

I love high carb meals because I love eating food, period! However, my wife Lauren prefers more calories from healthy, plant-based fats so that she doesn't feel as bloated or full, while still eating enough calories to optimize her body and health. The difference is, fats are more calorically dense than carb sources by a ratio of 9:4, so you don't

have to eat as much volume for the same amount of calories.

*SO, TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE, TWO DIFFERENT
MACRONUTRIENT RATIOS, BUT EACH ONE WORKS FOR
THE INDIVIDUAL!*

Make sense?

Secondly, some people feel they run smoother on high fat. That their energy is more sustained and their blood sugar levels are more controlled, giving them a more even, balanced sense of focus. This can also translate into the gym as a more balanced performance/output.

Alternatively, others feel they run better on high carb foods. That the added glycogen really fuels hard workouts and that their brain tends to operate better on glucose from carbohydrate, over ketones from fats.

Can you see why this can get confusing?

Because unless you go through a degree of trial and pay close attention to your own biofeedback, you will forever be lost in the conflicting information, which leads many people to going back to their old ways.

But that isn't you is it? You don't give up. Let's make that clear.

From here on in – this is your time to finally make this work, and work WELL. I can tell you from experience that when you find the right ratios, your strength will skyrocket through the roof, it will be easier to get lean than EVER before, you will build muscle so effortlessly because your strength and food intake is right on target. All the variables come together to create the perfect muscle-building, fat-loss environment. Trust me on that.

Oh, and why haven't I talked about protein yet?!

That's always the biggest point of discussion, right?

Let me be clear. Most people are FAR too obsessed with protein intake. I was one of them. I am here to tell you that, when you optimize your digestive capability and actually eat high quality sources of plant protein, your body's requirements are actually much less than you realize.

I won't bang on too much about this as if you need info on this go to the book I referred to in the introduction, but what I will say is that protein is banged home because it's a profitable industry. How else do you sell BS supplement powders in abundance to kids who want to get jacked? How else to you make animal products seem like a necessity on the dinner plate?

By rigging and funding studies that support that. By hardcore marketing campaigns that have led us all to believe that we need TONS of protein to be healthy or build muscle.



Trust me, its one of THE BIGGEST misconceptions out there. Let me put it this way... before I was vegan I would eat 250g of protein per day and feel lethargic and tired after every meal. My strength in the gym was average at best and it was tough getting lean or getting bigger for that matter. As a vegan I HALVED that protein intake and replaced those other lost calories with plant-based carbs and fats.

Not only did my strength SKYROCKET, but my energy went up, and I didn't feel lethargic after my meals. My sleeping improved, it's so much easier to get lean now, and I'm bigger, heavier and stronger as a vegan (on half the protein) than I **EVER** was as a non-vegan.

I will tell you time and time again, my experience is NOT uncommon. Many vegans will tell you the same thing. So let go of what you think you know and approach things from a new angle. You want new results? Then you NEED a new angle.

I suggest to shoot for anywhere between 0.7g/kg – 0.9g/kg. To be honest, most people would be okay with the lower end of the spectrum as long as they consume their protein from whole foods and eat enough total calories. Remember, its quality over quantity AND how well we absorb and assimilate those proteins too – which I talk about in later chapters.

I challenge you to let go of the BS you've read on the Internet about 'protein this and protein that' and just learn through your own biofeedback and results each week. if I can do it, you can too.

Also realize you need to reframe what you think are bodybuilding macros. Traditional bodybuilding diets will tell us we need HIGH protein, with either very low carbs or low fat. You know – the whole chicken and broccoli nonsense. I even see vegans doing this but with tofu and greens. It is a BIG part of why I wrote this book - because you don't have to force down any macronutrient to achieve fat loss or build

muscle. It's time to break away from that old thinking that doesn't serve you anymore.

Vegan macros do and will look different to what you are used to, so realize that from the get-go. It doesn't mean they are worse or wrong! It means you need to let go and reframe what you think works.

Depending on if you are high carb or high fat or a mixed ratio, your macros might look anything like this:

*Higher carb (*My preferred ratios) –
60-70% carb / 20% protein / 10-20% fat
(in some cases people will do even more carbs)*

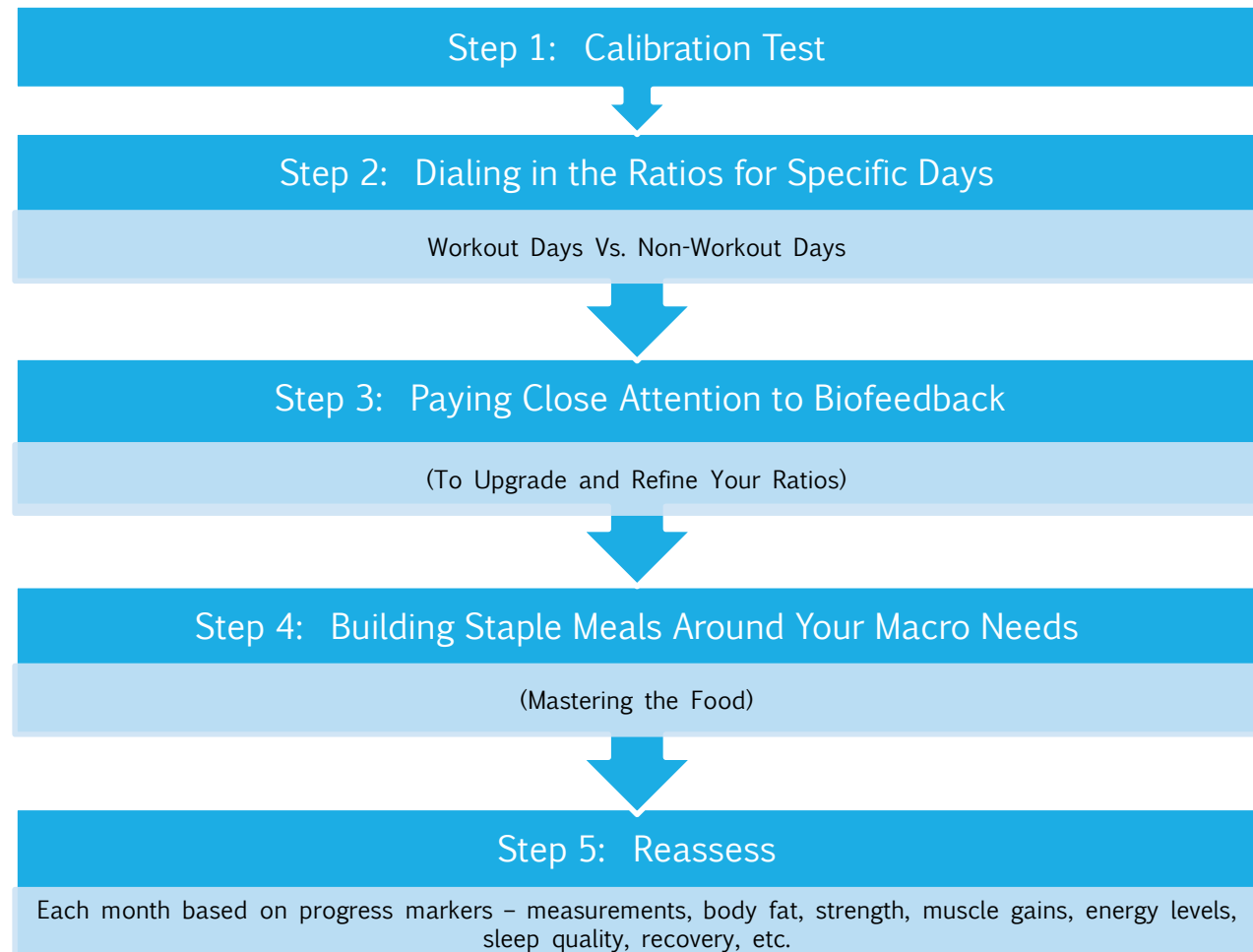
*Higher fat –
50-60 % fat / 20% protein / 30% carb
(again these ratios are just rough estimates
they can & will vary from day to day)*

*Mixed Ratio –
50% carb / 20% protein / 30% fat*

It is important to realize that those numbers aren't fixed either.

That based on how active you are, and your goals and biofeedback, these ratios can and will change on a day to day basis. So be okay with being fluid about this, and as you refine your own process, you will get a feel of what works best for you on non-workout days, workout days, and so on.

So here is how you begin to decipher what works for you. Follow these steps for the next two weeks and pay close attention to the biofeedback markers I talked about in the previous chapter.



Step 1: Calibration Test

For 3-5 days eat more high-fat/low-carb with a fixed protein ratio (I will give you sources and examples later in this book and talk about finding your protein ratio later in this chapter). Then for 3-5 days go high-carb/low-fat and fixed protein ratio. Or you can do it in the reverse order, whatever you choose.

Allow things to run their course. Pay close attention to how you feel – your biofeedback.

Remember the cues I talked about in the previous chapter?

Go back to that and base your feedback around those questions.

MY EXAMPLE:

FOR ME PERSONALLY I NOTICED ON A HIGH FAT DIET, I DON'T FEEL AS SATISFIED WHEN I EAT, NOR DO I SEEM TO PERFORM AS WELL IN THE GYM, AND IT CAN BE VERY EASY FOR ME TO OVER-CONSUME CALORIES, AS I LIKE TO EAT LARGE PORTIONS, WHICH ISN'T IDEAL WHEN YOU ARE TRYING TO NOT GAIN LOADS OF WEIGHT. ON THE OTHER HAND I FEEL GREAT WITH MORE CARBS. I FEEL FULLER, MORE SATISFIED AND MY PERFORMANCE IN THE GYM IS ALWAYS MUCH BETTER.

This is not to say it will be the same for you, and you have to remember that I still eat fat! Just not 'high fat', by traditional standards. In fact, I encourage people to NOT avoid a particular macronutrient. The saying "The fat you eat is the fat you wear" is complete and utter garbage by the way (if you haven't heard that, it's a common saying some people use who are phobic of all fats, including plant-based fats).

IT'S NOT ANY ONE MACRONUTRIENT THAT IS TO BLAME! IT IS EITHER THE OVER CONSUMPTION OF CALORIES AND/OR ENOUGH HORMONAL DYSFUNCTION TO AFFECT HOW YOUR BODY UTILIZES FOOD AND BURNS FAT.

Remember that.

Likewise carbs will NOT make you fat as a singular nutrient, people are either carb-phobic or fat-phobic, it's insane and needs to stop.

Often it's just over eating and under moving – or eating foods at the wrong times (nutrient timing), which can play a role and we'll cover in a later chapter.

Lets get back to the strategy implementation here.

Like I said, the best thing you can do is 3-5 days of high fat, then 3-5 days of high carb, followed by 3-5 days of a mixed ratio so half and half. If you want approximate numbers it would look like - 60% carbohydrate / 20% protein / 20% fats – then reverse that order keeping the protein the same. For a mixed ratio do 40-50% carbs and 30-40% fats. Then, what you can do is look back over your cues and feedback from each ratio and distill a picture as to what works for your unique physiology.

Step 2: Dialing In The Ratios For Specific Days

Begin to layout what kinds of foods you seem to respond best to on certain days.

So in many cases, your diet, cravings, and ratios might look different on a workout day compared to a rest day.

Maybe you pull the carbs back slightly on a rest day and add in more fat, giving you a more controlled focus over a longer period. Followed by a higher injection of carbs on a workout day to perform at an intensive, explosive level for a shorter period of time.

This is how I generally think of fats and carbs.

Fats are like sustained slow release energy, often

better on a rest day and days where you need to concentrate on work tasks. Carbs are like a performance enhancer around workouts, so their energy release is more explosive and short term but it allows you to perform on an acute level.

In my “Bulk-Cut Hybrid Protocol” and “Vegainz 12 Week Muscle Builder” programs I lay out suggested macronutrient ratios for workout days, non-workout days, and re-feed days. So if you need a clear-cut plan that’s already done for you, that is the plan for you and can be found at www.EvolvingAlpha.com.

EVOLVING
ALPHA

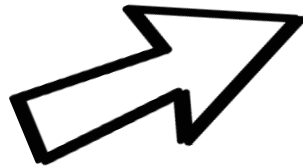
Step 3: Paying Close Attention To Biofeedback To Upgrade & Refine Your Ratios

At this stage you want to maintain close attention to your biofeedback. I really STRESS biofeedback because it is what separates the people who get outstanding, long-lasting results from the ones who get half-baked, transient results.

Which do you want?

So over time keep tweaking the macronutrients and total calories on your plate depending on your goal around muscle growth or fat loss.

It isn't hard. It is as simple as this.



Option One (Higher Carb and Higher Calories)

- 1 x Serve Baked Tempeh
- 1 x Cup of Jasmine Rice
- ½ x Cup of Cannellini Beans Or Chickpeas
- 1.5 x Cups Stir fry Veg

Option Two (Higher Fat and Higher Calories)

- 1 x Serve Baked Tempeh
- ¾ x Cup Jasmine Rice
- ½ x Cup Homemade Guacamole (Avocado Based)
- 1.5 x Cups Stir fry Veg

Option Three (Mixed Ratios and Less Calories)

- 1 x Serve Baked Tempeh
- ½ x Cup Brown rice
- ¼ x Cup Homemade Guacamole (Avocado Based)
- 2 x Cups Stir fry Veg

Can you see how the fundamental food choices in these three meals are the same, yet each meal varies in calorie density and macronutrient ratios?

These subtle changes come from things such as subbing out jasmine rice for brown rice (less calories), adding in more vegetables, and smaller portions of beans. Same foods, just different serving sizes.

This is a prime example of how you can adjust your macros and food choices to achieve a slightly different goal. Subtle, yet profound, without the exclusion of lots of food groups too, like many bodybuilders think is the best or only way.

Be okay with changing those macros and food choices as you evolve through the process. You may find you bloat or feel strange with certain foods or ratios of foods, so try changing the food source or

the ratios. By doing this you will slowly dial in closer and closer to that ideal, optimal range unique to you.

I warn you though, it does take patience.

You've been eating a certain way for your entire life. You can't just expect to master a new way in one week, which is most people's problem. They want to have the results – 'Yesterday', or revert back to old ways when that doesn't happen. Look, like I've said... If you want BETTER results, then do things differently. Invest the time NOW so you can reap the rewards later.

They WILL come, if you follow the directions in this book.

Step 4: Building Staple Meals Around Your Macro Needs (Mastering The Food)

As you begin to get a feel of what ratios of fats and carbs you feel best at, refine your meals around those ratios. Learn and master a couple of delicious meals that might serve a high fat purpose, if that is your goal. Equally learn and master a couple of meals that might serve a high carb purpose. Master them and they can be the foundation for your diet.

The best part is once you have a group of baseline meals & recipes, you can then experiment further with different cooking methods, herbs and spices, different kinds of vegetables, beans, seeds and grains to change the flavor, texture and caloric density of the meal.

Once you master the foundation meals you can expand further and still have a good grasp on how your metabolism can handle the different foods without blowing off course. The key lies in a few good foundation meals, which I will give you some

examples for in the next chapter with images and suggested cooking methods (my own recipes and foods).

MY EXAMPLE: I HAVE A COUPLE OF BASIC STAPLE MEALS THAT REPRESENT THE FOUNDATION OF MY DIET. THEY CONSISTENT OF THINGS LIKE TEMPEH SANDWICHES WITH EZEKIEL BREAD, CAULIFLOWER WRAPS WITH DICED QUINOA BURGER ON TOP, A RANGE OF BEANS AND RICE WITH FALAFELS (CHICKPEAS) AND A RANGE OF DIFFERENT COLORED VEG. I ALSO USE BANANA AS A BASE FOR MY ICE CREAM ON A NEAR DAILY BASIS. THOSE ARE THE FOUNDATION FOODS OF MY DIET, YET I STILL ADD IN VARIATIONS AND DIFFERENT FOODS AROUND THOSE BASELINE MEALS EACH WEEK.

Step 5: Reassess Your Progress Each Month Based On Progress Markers

Once you begin to dial in the macros, the portions, and the baseline meals with variations, you want to keep track of your overall progress. The obvious stuff like circumference measurements, weight, body fat, muscle density and so on – but remember don't freak out in the 'teething period' if things aren't going perfectly. It can take time to refine your own process before you master it. If you bail out in week one because you went up 0.5% body fat that is an idiotic, impatient move on your part.

Be methodical. Be patient. Biofeedback daily. Baseline meals. Master this art and you will absolutely crush it.

Base your progress around strength and endurance too...

How do you feel in the gym?

The "Pump"?

Are you recovering well?

Can you lift more?

Lift for longer?

If not, you might need to refine or tweak the first 4 steps more to hit your unique ratio.

Trust me – it IS there, you just have to calibrate and bring it to the surface.

CHAPTER 5: The Ideal Plant Foods For Vegan Bodybuilding

The BEST foods for a vegan to build amazing amounts of muscle on, get lean and truly healthy are WHOLE PLANT FOODS. Now here and there you may deviate from that and eat processed vegan foods and that is okay, but if you want the best bang for your buck?

Whole plant foods are the answer, hands down.

On the following pages are a series of tables outlining the plant foods I use. Now, some of them I do not use often, but others I use multiple times per day.

I'm really showing you this to illustrate the idea of choice. Showing you that if your digestion and biofeedback doesn't react well with one kind of food, you have vast amounts of options to choose from to rectify that.

You will notice that a lot of my meals aren't elaborate recipes but a well-balanced combination of a fibrous carb and starchy carb, plant protein, and plant fat. Your meal doesn't have to be complex with a multitude of ingredients to be delicious and satisfying.

Fibrous Carbohydrates

Yellow Squash	Celery
Spinach	Cucumber
Seaweed	Collard Greens
Tomato	Lettuces
Bell Peppers/Capsicum	Leeks
Parsley	Spring Onions
Mushrooms	Kale
Cauliflower	Cabbage
Brussel Sprouts	Broccoli
Asparagus	Artichoke
Bok Choy	Zucchini/Courgette
Eggplant	Brocolini
Mirliton	Sweet peppers

Starchy Carbohydrates

Potato	Pumpkin
Spaghetti Squash	Rice
Quinoa	Acorn Squash
Carrots	Butternut Squash
Gluten Free/Wheat Free Pasta	Gluten Free Oats
Brown Rice Noodles	Couscous

Plant Strong Protein Sources

Organic Non GMO Tofu	Lentils	Beans
Flax Tempeh	Sweet peas	Chick peas
Tempeh	Seitan	Mock meats
Hemp Tofu	Pumpkin Seed	Amaranth
Hemp Hearts (Seed)	Quinoa	Buckwheat

Nuts, Oils, & Seeds

Almonds/Almond Butter	Cashews/Cashew Butter
Walnuts	Brazil Nuts
Macadamia Nuts	Hazelnuts
Chestnuts	Pecans
Pistachios	Pine Nuts
Pumpkin Seeds	Sesame Seeds
Avocado	Pumpkin seed
Flax Seed	Coconut
Coconut Oil	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Macadamia Oil	Hemp Seed oil

CHAPTER 6: What Should Your Meals Look Like While Cutting? (Suggested Ratios of Nutrients/Portion Sizes)

This is a loaded question so let's dive right into it.

There will be a few factors that come into play with what your plant strong meals should look like.

Factors such as:

1) Metabolic capacity (BMR/TMR) how many calories your body burns / can handle before you spill over into storing fat. It will be different for everyone and using an online calculator can help, but it is always a rough guide at BEST.

2) Your activity level/exertion. This is often factored into the calorie calculators, but what I've found is that it is still a rough estimate.

For example – I used an online calculator to project my approximate caloric intake. It suggested about 3200 calories per day, based on my weight, build, goal and approximate activity levels.

I actually lost weight far too fast at this intake. So I had to increase it to 3500 and still lost weight, but at a much slower rate. Through trial and error and PATIENCE, I determined my approximate intake for slow controlled fat loss (which was my goal) as about 3600 calories per day. Now 400 calories doesn't seem like a lot, but it can really affect your performance and goal if you don't have those things dialed in. So realize that the calculators are like a starting point – and from there you need to refine the process to find your 'metabolic sweet spot'.

3) Your current body composition – If I were to give an overweight, 50 year-old, sedentary non-vegan woman 1000 calories of rice, chickpeas and vegetables - and I also ate the same dish - our bodies would have VERY different partitioning ratios (how the body allocates food to build muscle, bones, organs, and store as fat). Which means our bodies would do very different things with those same calories.

She would be more prone to having elevated blood sugar levels, which could be due to some insulin resistance from her being overweight and her poor chronic dietary choices that got her there to begin with. She would also have less muscle mass (sedentary) to store glycogen (sugar) forcing her body to store more of the energy in fat cells.

On the other hand, my body would control the blood sugar levels, using insulin to push energy into muscles, increasing my recovery and performance and storing less as fat.

So realize that based on your current body composition, you will have to adjust your portions and macros at times to keep body fat levels in check. I will explain how to do that later in this chapter.



4) Sleep, gut health, hormonal status – These can be more minor issues for many, but in some cases can be a really pronounced barrier for someone to achieve muscle growth or fat loss. You will be surprised the role sleep and gut absorption have in building muscle and getting lean, which in turn impacts hormonal balance. I will discuss this in more depth in a later chapter, as it is so important and often overlooked.

If you get stomach bloating or feel digestive stress it means you may need to change up the plant foods you eat. As a rule of thumb, your meals while cutting or bulking should reflect the food choices you decided on in previous chapters through biofeedback around bloating, energy levels etc. This is where most people get it wrong.

They think that to ‘cut’ fat and still hold muscle they have to restrict carbohydrates (typical bodybuilder strategy). I see this mainly with non-vegans but also

with some vegans who resort to eating tofu and spinach in an attempt to try and lean out. It just isn’t the case. You can still lean out and get shredded and remain ‘full’ looking, with carbohydrate in your diet! Believe that! I do it all the time! And many others I have taught.

The key is balance – just enough, but not too much.

The first fundamental lies in being in a subtle caloric deficit. For example if you require 2500 calories a day to maintain weight, then try 2400 – be SUBTLE, you don’t want to drive your body into the depths of deprivation or under-performing because you decided to cut it down to 2000 calories to drop fat faster. You will not only drop fat, but lose muscle, lose your mind and your performance, sleep and recovery will all fall to bits.

Not how we want to do things if you want to make this work and really crush it, right?

So be subtle at first, reduce your caloric intake by just 100 calories. If you HATE counting calories like I do, then count them for 3-5 days, get familiar with the portion sizes like ½ a cup of beans, 1 cup of rice etc. without the added effort of counting those



calories long term. Once you know how many calories are in each cup or portion, then you can work with that and just use Tbsp./cup measurements for most things.

It's what I do. This way I still stick to the same volumes of foods, measuring to some degree without the mind-numbing task of counting calories. If you decide to count that's fine too, whatever helps you keep an accurate tab on where you are.

The fundamental thing to realize is, your meals should change in composition without eliminating foods you like (which MOST people get wrong). All you need to do is taper back on the portion sizes of calorically dense foods like nuts & seeds and add increase the calorically light ones – like green vegetables, as opposed to total elimination. So if you enjoy rice and beans and normally eat a 1000-calorie meal of them, taper back to 900 calories of it – and there is your subtle 100-calorie deficit you need to stimulate fat loss.

Or cut back to 700 calories of rice and beans and add 200 calories of green vegetables in too, which helps add additional volume to your meal. This helps with your satiety levels.

Isn't that so painfully simple!?

People love to over complicate things. But realize, simplicity is often the key to ultimate results. I know some people will say, what about glycogen depletion to burn more fat? and pulling subcutaneous water from under the skin by restricting carbs?

To that I say, they just weren't patient enough. Nor did they cut calories subtly, for long enough.

*DOING THOSE THINGS THEY SUGGEST IS AN ATTEMPT TO
CREATE AN ILLUSION THAT YOU ARE MORE DRY AND
LEAN THAN YOU REALLY ARE.*

The main reason being, they didn't cut for long enough and they just weren't ready.

The body loves routine and it responds well to known variables when it comes to fat loss. So if you subtly cut calories and still remain hydrated and still consume carbohydrate your body will slowly get leaner and optimize around those routines and ratios.

Trust me, it works!



So in reality your cutting meals should look much like 'bulking meals' (AKA meals with a surplus of calories) which are based off your initial biofeedback cues as to what foods work best with you - only now, the portions are smaller. If you find you get hungry because of the smaller portions, then my suggestion is to taper back slightly more on any fats or carbohydrates in the diet so that you can add in more green vegetables.

This helps add more volume to your meals (and fiber) which is important because receptors in the stomach will register a sense of feeling full as the volume of your stomach increases and fills, EVEN if the caloric density of those foods is lower. Essentially, this means more food without more calories.

As you cut your calories further into a deeper deficit, add in more green vegetables, while still maintaining that calorie deficit to help bolster the volume of food you eat, suppressing those sensors that can trigger hunger, making your plan easier to stick with.

Below are some examples of a normal maintenance or bulking meal (left) and a cutting meal (right), you can see the food choices are the same, but the ratios of the foods have been tweaked to maintain the food volume while bringing down the caloric density.

No need to eliminate or avoid food groups at all. That is an outdated way of doing things. Evolving Alpha is like upgrading yourself - upgrading how you think, operate, and perform, and it begins here.



CHAPTER 7: What Should Your Meals Look Like While Building Muscle?

(Suggested Ratios of Nutrients/Portion Sizes)

Building quality size and muscle density all comes down to creating an anabolic environment in the body. What does that mean? An environment that facilitates muscle growth! And what kind of environment is that? It is an environment of 'caloric surplus' and optimal hormone response.

So how does all of this work? Let me start here...

The same principles apply here with any cutting diet. First of all, it can help to know your approximate metabolic capacity - your BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) plus your approximate activity levels to get your TMR (Total Metabolic Rate).

Like I said in the previous chapter, your TMR is how many calories your body needs to survive and sustain your activity levels. In a cutting protocol we would subtly bring the calorie intake below your TMR. With a muscle building protocol you want to be slightly over that threshold, in a calorie surplus.

Say for instance your TMR is approximately 3000 calories. You could be in the realm of 3200-3500 calories to build quality muscle without gaining too much body fat. You can exceed that 3500 threshold, but then you run the risk of just adding more fat to your body without added muscle gain.

Adding too much of the wrong kinds of food and the wrong kind of weight can impact estrogen and testosterone levels negatively, along with blunting your insulin response, which makes fat loss harder in the future and muscle growth more difficult.

So as you can see there is a sweet spot. Too little and you won't be in enough of a caloric surplus to build muscle. Too much and you will be adding extra fat to your body that you don't need.

The key is finding that sweet spot, so start off close to your suggested TMR.

For instance in week 1, if you are 200 calories over your TMR but do not gain any weight, you could subtly increase it to 300 or even 400 calories over in week 2 or 3. The key is patience and subtle changes early on, this way you get a grasp on how much your body can handle, without adding loads of extra fat to your frame. (NOT the goal!)

With a cutting diet like I suggest in the previous chapter, you can tweak your fat or starchy carbohydrate portions and add in more green vegetables to dial your calorie intake back while still eating a large volume of food. Likewise with a bulking diet you can add more of those foods back into your meal plan. The two styles are just opposite ends of the same spectrum.

*A GOOD PLANT-BASED MUSCLE BUILDING PLAN
PIVOTS AROUND ADDING IN MORE STARCHES, MORE
PLANT-BASED FATS AND JUST A LARGE CALORIC
DENSITY OF FOOD.*

People often question if you can build muscle on a plant-based diet, and they feel like eating enough protein or calories can be challenging. It is only challenging if you don't have a grasp on what your target is and what foods best suit the caloric density you are trying to reach.

For example you could eat 10,000 calories a day in plant foods if you wanted too, you would just add in lots of nut butters and nut based recipes as they are very calorically dense by nature.

Would that be ideal? Of course not!

But it is an example to show that you can tweak the caloric density of your food choices to easily hit a solid calorie surplus with ample amounts of protein.

Each person will be slightly different too. Some people will be able to handle a higher surplus of calories and not store as much of it as fat, but

others won't be as fortunate.

Why?

Because of a concept called "partitioning ratios", that I have skimmed over in previous chapters.

This concept is essentially how our body partitions nutrients -- in simple terms, what our body decides to do with the food we eat. Whether it stores it as fat, builds muscle, bones and so on.

Each person has a unique partitioning ratio that dictates how the body handles calories. Very often you see prime examples of this with genetic body types, like ectomorph, endomorph and mesomorph. Whereby there is a genetic component to someone's build/body type (Partitioning ratio).

This doesn't mean you are stuck with your genetics, nor can you blame them for your current build, but it does mean you have to factor in your unique metabolism and partitioning ratios when it comes to adding muscle. So just because Jonny next door is eating 4500 calories and not gaining fat, doesn't mean you can do the exact same plan and expect the same result.

Make sense?

The most important thing to remember with a muscle building plan is to take it slow, much like cutting, and subtly add in calories each week until you find your muscle-building, metabolic sweet spot - that magical space where you gain weight and muscle with minimal fat storage at the same time.

Just realize you can manipulate the caloric density of your meals and still eat a similar volume of food whether a bulking or cutting diet, by making the food

choices more 'dense', to alter that cutting goal into a bulking/muscle building goal.

The food choices should inherently be the same. It's all about portion manipulation. That is the key so many people overlook and don't understand.



CHAPTER 8: To Track Or Not To Track Calories?

(The Evolving Alpha Approach to Tracking and Portion Sizes)

All this talk about tracking calories in the chapters prior is enough to give me a stroke. I, for one, really don't like to count calories, BUT I do think there is a place and time for it too. A great vegan bodybuilder, Torre Washington, never counts calories or protein; he eats instinctively using biofeedback like I suggest.

So when should you count and when shouldn't you? Is counting ideal for you or is it not practical for long-term sustainability?

There are two sides here to consider so let's analyze the pros and cons around tracking calories and macros and when you should do it. Then, you can make up your mind on what works best for you.



PROS of Calorie Counting

- Dialing it in for a show or event – In this case counting calories will give you a precise handle on your daily food consumption, so you can clearly track markers to know if you are on target. Often this is ideal if you are REALLY dialing things in for a bodybuilding competition and every calorie and macronutrient plays a role in that final day of conditioning. When you need to get down to those final last few grams of body fat, tracking calories is often very beneficial for truly dialing in your conditioning.
- More variety (but sometimes less) - You can have more variation in your diet when you track macros. It can allow you more flexibility to choose a range of foods. It's really just like a puzzle of numbers you put together, and at the end of the day if the number reaches an even balance you will be on target to your result. For beginners or people who aren't fanatical about counting though, it can actually create less variation in your diet. It all depends on your personality type.
- More systematic approach to your nutrition - Which for some people is a good thing. They need tangible numbers to work with to know they are on track. This is heavily dictated by your personality type and your relationship with food. For people who love numbers and work well with systems this can be a good option.

CONS of Calorie Counting

- Can be more time consuming - As you have to weigh out/portion out and track food intake in apps or on paper, just not as time effective for some people, with the potential math involved.
- It 'can' be more restrictive - If you eat out or break the routine, you have to be able to either weigh your portions or know the caloric intake of the foods you consume, so practicality-wise it's not always optimal, especially if the places you eat don't have an approximate calorie count for the food. Some online apps will, but even then it's often a guessing game.
- It can magnify eating disorders and obsessive thinking around food and eating - I've seen this happen to many people that develop undiagnosed eating disorders around calories and tracking macronutrients. At the end of the day it has to enhance your life, not degrade it. If you have emotional compulsions around food, tracking it can often make it worse.

Now let's talk about using non-counting/macro forms of measurement (using volumes – this is how I do it) and how this can be beneficial or not for you...

PROS of Volumetric Measuring

- Less time consuming, which for a lot of people is a big barrier to long term sustainability.
- Less systematic, but helps strengthen a positive psychology with food, as it's based more around instinctive eating.
- In some cases this way of eating can provide more variety, as the portions are more universal, which means you don't have to fixate as much on numbers and math.
- Is more in tune with your biofeedback and the body's undulating metabolism, whereas tracking can be very rigid and may not factor in all the metabolic/hormonal variations we go through each day.
- In many people with eating disorders or who have obsessive-compulsive behavior around food this can be a great way to eat.

CONS of Volumetric Measuring

- Not as accurate as calorie counting, but if done correctly over a period of days and weeks it can actually prove to be more accurate (there is a dialing in period)
- Harder to track variety at times. There will be times where you eat different foods and it can prove a bit more challenging to dial in the calorie intake, as you won't always have a good grasp on the caloric density of a food, making it harder to estimate the right portion for you.

Personally, I feel you can achieve massive, amazing results doing the second option, based on volumes/measurements and instinctive eating. If you are preparing for a show, it might be ideal to track calories as you get closer to the show. It is not to say that before your contest prep begins, you can't eat using volumes like I do.

I find it is more practical, less time consuming and it doesn't create the obsessiveness in myself, that I see others dealing with (it's not to say everyone will face this). I do feel that using volumes and dialing it in over a period of days and weeks, is the ultimate way to achieving long-term, consistent results, and I will explain how to do that next.

So tracking calories is the more widely known method. Download an app like Cronometer and plug numbers in and hit the totals you need. But HOW do you eat based around volumes and instincts? And is it right for you?

Let's find out!



Step 1: Set Your Baseline And Track Calories For ONE Day

The first step is a 'calibration period', where all you need to know is your approximate calorie goal. It just means you have to track your calorie numbers on day 1 to get a baseline, that's it. Track ONE day.

Just Google search "online calorie calculator" - and you will find various tools. From here begin to break down the amount of calories you want to eat for each meal. For example if you want to eat 4 meals divide your total calorie intake over those four meals. From there plug in the new foods into those 4 separate calorie counts till they fit.

Realize that most calculators set the protein goal very high, Do NOT stress about this as much. The main focus is hitting a total calorie number FIRST. Then you can dial the macros in - through later steps, you will see.

Or alternatively, what you can do is eat as you normally would, without any changes, and track your food for the next 2-3 days. Write down the foods you eat and in what amounts (1 cup, 1 veggie burger, etc.). Then use an online tool such as calorieking.com to write the total number of calories in each of those foods/serving sizes. Add them all up to get a total count of calories consumed each day.

You might find you are over eating or under eating by a fair bit compared to the 'ideal' numbers an online calculator will give you, but that is okay. That's why I like this method - it gives a 'true to you' snapshot. The best approach is to now taper your calorie intake by 100-200 calories up or down to create a small stimulus for change, enough that you begin the process, but it's small enough that you don't feel negative effects of a radical calorie change, such as poor sleep, poor mood, cravings, weakness, etc.

Often people will eat the same foods, in similar portions on most days. So getting a feel of your 'average day' over a 2-3 day period allows you to know where the best place in your diet is to either introduce or reduce calories by a subtle amount.

In summary of Step 1, you have two options:

You can either, plug your numbers into a calorie calculator to get a estimate number and work from that like I initially suggested.

OR...

You can record your current food intake using cups and measurements, look up their calorie content, and then mildly adjust that intake based on your goal – and get a definitive number to work with. To be honest, for many people, this would be my primary suggestion.

Calorie Calculator

The Calorie Calculator can be used to estimate the calories you need to consume each day. This calculator can also provide some simple guideline if you want to gain or lose weight. Use the "metric units" tab if you are more comfortable with the international standard metric units.

⬅️ Modify the values and click the **Calculate** button to use

US Units Metric Units Other Units

Age

Gender ☒ male ☐ female

Height feet inches

Weight pounds

Activity

Calculate

Time	Food/Beverage & Quantity	
5AM	1/2cup almond milk 1/2cup coconut milk 1tbsp coconut oil 1tbsp cocoa powder	1/4cup hemp protein 1.5cup frozen berries 3chips stevia
8AM	1cup almond milk 1tbsp chia 1tbsp coconut	1/4cup pum seeds 1 coconut flour muffin
10AM	1 whole carrot	

Step 2: Learn Your Volumes And Use That As Your 'Go-To' Measurement Source

Once you know the calorie goal for each meal, measure out each portion of food using cups, tablespoons, or approximate physical volume measurements such as a palm-sized serve of quinoa burger for instance or a cup-sized serving of rice and beans.

I find using the body volume measurements, like a fist of broccoli or a palm serve of quinoa burger, may not be quite as accurate as cups and tablespoons, BUT it does allow for you to eat more freely while you are out and don't have access to measuring utensils. Essentially allowing you to be more adaptive to eating on the run and take the stress and time-consuming nature out of tracking calories. It is more of a rough guide, but I have found that when you do it consistently, you can

periodically dial it in further and further and actually get very lean doing this!

Like I said, I personally use this method, so first off I know my rough calorie goal (that is step one).

I then know the volumes that correlate with each portion of food (That is step two). For instance with some of the raw tacos I eat I use 1.5 cups of cauliflower rice knowing that is the exact calorie count for that aspect of my meal. I don't have to weigh it or track calories or macros around the rice. I just know those 3 x ½ cup servings reach my goal and if I see my progress slow or go the opposite way – its as simple as making minor tweaks to those volumes as you will see soon.

This way of eating takes you through a 'teething period', where you might gain weight, even if you are trying to lose it, or you might lose weight even if you are trying to gain. That is OKAY! It's all about calibration, after a few weeks you should have a relatively good grasp on your metabolic threshold and how your body is reacting to the volumes of food.

Example One:

Michael wanted to gain mass and size, and he began implementing this volume system into his eating. On day one he tracks his calories to about 3000 total and then broke down that total into 5 meals at about 600 calories per meal. He then took the desired foods he wanted for each meal and figured out how much of each food he needed to total 600 calories. For instance, one of his meals was rice, beans, and stir-fried vegetables.

He allowed for 250 calories of brown rice, 200 calories of butter beans and 150 calories of vegetables. He then measured out cup sizes for each food and saw that it came out to 1 cup of rice, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of beans and 1.5 cups of vegetables (not accurate examples). So from here, Michael now knows for that meal he can have those portions on a daily basis – record these volumes down on paper and keep it on your fridge.

Likewise, for another meal Michael wanted one palm sized homemade quinoa burger, 1 fist of potato and 1 fist of salad. This is a meal he has when he is out at work, so he doesn't have cups to measure with, but he uses those approximate portion sizes to gauge his food intake.

After a week Michael notices he is dropping weight, when he was trying to gain size – all he does is subtly tweak some of his meals for that day. He chooses to make his lunch meal and dinner meal slightly larger because that is when he feels the most hungry (Meal 3 and 5) so he bumps the portions on those meals up from 1 cup of rice to 1.5 cups. He keeps doing this for

another week and observes his weight begin to stabilize and go up, slowly – which for him is the goal. This is how Michael dialed in his volume style eating and paid close attention to his biofeedback around his weight and tweaked his portions accordingly.

Example Two:

Mary wants to lose 20lbs of fat, but she also wants to do it slowly so she doesn't binge eat or crave bad foods. Like Michael, Mary first tracks her calorie intake for a day and transfers those meals into volumes based on the calorie goal.

In the first week Mary notices her weight actually went up! She got worried and cut her portions back a fair bit going from 1 cup of XYZ (being any food) to 0.5 cups. She noticed in the following week, she felt more tired, had more cravings and her workouts were not as good. She then weighed herself at the end of

the week and saw she had lost 6lbs. She felt that was too fast and it was impacting her quality of life and the sustainability of her plan, so she then notched her portions back up slightly to $\frac{3}{4}$ cups. In the following week, she noticed her energy was a lot better and she felt more in control. She then weighed herself and saw she was down 0.5lbs. For Mary this was the 'sweet spot'. She had found her approximate portions, managed to get a slower, more controlled fat loss that still allowed her to perform.

So can you see how sometimes this style of eating takes a week or two, to dial in? But once you hit your sweet spot, it's much easier to maintain from there on out!

In saying all this – you could do this style of eating for the majority of the year, then when it comes to a show or a period of time where you really need to dial in your conditioning you can switch over to tracking calories in more detail. I don't see anything wrong with taking a hybrid approach to it!

CHAPTER 9: Non-Workout Day Nutrition

(Nutrition & Nutrient Timing on Rest Days)

Like everything in this book, non-workout day nutrition will be very dependent on your goal. So first off get clear about your goal around building muscle or burning fat (remember unless you are a total 'newbie', you really can't do these at the same time with optimal success)

To know how to tackle workout and non-workout days, you have to get clear about your goal FIRST.

Okay, so now that you know what you are trying to achieve you can begin to formulate your non-workout day nutrition to synergize with that goal.

How?...

Let me explain.

Many people think of their nutrition and training as two separate programs, that don't enhance each other. They don't realize the two are synergistically intertwined and that what you eat on a workout day, can and will have a different hormonal impact on your body - compared to if you ate those same foods in the same quantities on a non-workout day.

'Nutrient timing' can really help optimize our results.

Training And Nutrition Synergy

First off let me explain the basics. For instance, you were doing a heavy leg day and afterwards you refueled with a huge bowl of granola, oats, seeds, dates and bananas. Eating that food after a hard workout will allow your muscles to refuel. See, muscle glycogen stores have been depleted (like ringing the water out of a sponge, till it's dry) and the muscle is broken down, so insulin will shuttle those nutrients from your blood stream to muscles to refill glycogen and aid in muscle growth.

Think of your muscles like sponges and glycogen like the water in the sponge.

Not enough water and the sponge shrinks and dries up – much like a muscle! Your performance drops, you appear smaller and you aren't as strong. Your

endurance, or how long you can perform, also declines.

Likewise, too much water (or too many nutrients/calories) and the sponge fills to capacity, and then begins to drip water all over the floor (over-saturation). It is the same principle with your muscles. Too much nutrition at the wrong times and the overflow can be seen in the form of fat storage as excess energy the muscles cannot hold.



So take this principle with you when you think about how to fuel your non-workout days.

*TOO LITTLE NUTRIENTS AND YOU WILL UNDER
PERFORM. TOO MUCH AND YOU WILL STORE EXCESS
AS FAT.*

So if you ate that huge bowl of granola and dates on a non workout day, depending on your total calorie intake, there is a higher chance the body will say – “Right, I already have muscle glycogen as I haven’t had to use any today and now I’m getting excess fuel but my storage tanks are already full. So what do I do? I store the excess in fat cells.”

Now it’s not to say you can’t eat these foods on a non-workout day, but you DO have to have a grasp over your own biofeedback. Over time, build an

internal gauge around how your body handles calories on a rest day when you aren’t expending as much energy, and what kinds of foods are the best ones for your goal on any given day.

For instance, if your goal is muscle building or strength and performance, then you have much more flexibility to add additional calories to your diet or eat like it was a training day (even on rest days) as fat loss is of lesser concern and the main focus is muscle growth. On the other hand if your goal is fat loss with muscle preservation, then it is important to tweak and test your non-workout day nutrition at times to see how your body handles it.

Some people will say you need to eat more food to fuel recovery on those rest days and that is partly true, but it’s also important to consider your overall goal as well.

Non-Workout Day Nutrition For Fat Loss

This can be as simple as just eliminating some or all of your pre and post workout meals (that you would normally have on a training day) as you don't have to fuel up or recover from that particular training session. For instance on a training day you eat 5 meals, 2 of which are pre and post workout meals. The easiest way to change your plan for a rest day is to just omit the pre OR post workout meal and add some additional vegetables to either one to bolster the meal to compensate for one less meal on that day.

You are still consuming 4 meals, just slightly less calories to cater for a lower output on that day.

Here is my own example:

I train in the morning in a fasted state, which means

I don't eat before I train. As long as I fuel up enough the day before, my training the following morning is always good. I do however use a post workout shake and meal. On a non-workout day, the modifications would be as simple as cutting out the shake and changing the post workout meal slightly (adding more green vegetables in and removing some of the starchy carbs and plant fats like I said previously).

It could be as simple as maybe doing 75% of my normal portions (a slight portion reduction, still allowing the same food groups).

Simply reduce down the caloric density of your meal OR, like we talked about in previous chapters, tweak your portions to either achieve fat loss or muscle growth. For fat loss I will cut back on some of the more calorically dense foods, and add in more fibrous vegetables.

When my goal is muscle growth, I will normally just omit the shake and do the normal sized meals regardless of whether it is a training day or rest day – so can you see how simple this really is?

It is not about switching up massive parts of the routine, it could be as minor as cutting out one shake or one smoothie or pulling back on some of the more calorie-dense foods in the post workout meal and replacing them with more green vegetables, as your body may simply not need as much fuel on that day.

The key is synergy - realizing that many factors come into play with diet and understanding how it relates to training and your goal.



Meal Frequency

The reality is, it really doesn't matter if you consume one meal a day, or 10 meals.

The factors that DO matter are:

#1 - How much you eat

#2 - What you eat

And #3 - How you train

I have seen people eat one meal a day and get great results. Likewise I've seen people eat 6 meals a day and get the same results. The whole concept of 'stoking your metabolism' by eating more frequent-smaller meals, really doesn't make a difference in the

grand scheme of things. What I will say is, base your meal frequency around your biofeedback cues.

- How much food can you handle in one meal without feeling bloated and lethargic? If you experience these, your meals might be too large and you may need smaller more frequent meals.
- What times of day do you need to concentrate the most and what times can you eat more and afford to relax?
- Does eating before bed impact your sleep? I know it does for me!
- Do you need nutrition first thing in the morning to function? Or can you fast for a period of time and perform well before needing food?

- What time of day do you train and how many days a week do you train? (This will dictate when you have a pre and post workout meal and how many times a week you will need it)
- What times of day do you crave or seem to lose self-control the most? (This will dictate when you should consume some of your meals to help manage those hunger signals)

All those things will factor into your meal frequency and timing (which I will talk about in more depth next).

The take home point is, follow your biofeedback around meal frequency. I personally eat about 5 meals a day because I have to eat a large volume of food! Some people don't have time to do that so they may need to eat larger, but less frequent meals. On the other hand, others might not like the feeling of being so full and/or feeling tired from eating such

large meals, so they need to eat more often.

Lastly, you might find you need food first thing in the morning to help you function better, which means you have a larger 'eating window' during the day to eat smaller more frequent meals throughout that window. On the other hand, if you are like me and don't eat until after you train in the morning (around 10am) it just means you have to eat larger meals to get in all the nutrition you need for the day, because of the smaller eating window.

The key ALWAYS comes back to following your own biofeedback.

Try 3 meals, try 5 meals, try 7 meals. See how you feel around each trial – how time consuming was it? How did it affect your concentration? How did your digestion feel? How did you sleep? Look at all those variables when tweaking the meal frequency to get the perfect number for YOU!

Meal Timing



Essentially meal timing plays into meal frequency AND whether or not it is a workout or non-workout day. In summary, all you need to do is synergize your ideal meal frequency with a workout or non-workout day (what time of day you train) and you have your ideal meal timings.

For me personally, like I said – I train fasted (empty stomach). I find that I can train harder and do more by having maximum blood supply to my muscles, heart, lungs and brain – rather than allocating some of that blood supply to digest food. This is my own biofeedback and it's what works best for me.

Again, you need to experiment and find out how this works for you.

At about 9:30 A.M. I have a plant based protein shake post workout. At about 10:30 I have my first meal, which I consider my post-workout meal, and it's usually packed with lots of whole food plant proteins and carbs. This is often my largest meal of the day.

After that post-workout window, I tend to have 3-4 additional meals. My other largest meal will be dinner, around 6pm, which is usually my final meal of the day. On occasion I may have a smaller snack-meal after dinner like a 'dessert' – nice cream (banana ice cream) for instance. For me personally, my sleeping is impaired if I eat too late, so I make sure I finish all my meals around 6.30-7pm. Again learn your own biofeedback! You may not have this problem, but if you do, factor it in.

I also know some people who eat ONE meal a day and it is a HUGE meal. They train in the evening and fast ALL day before refueling with a HUGE post

workout meal, which carries them over to the following day during their fasting period – they too have great results. It works for them. I personally wouldn't like to do this as I love training in the morning and I find I need to eat more often to maintain my mental clarity and cognitive performance – but again, their biofeedback is different to mine and they found what is optimal for them.

Experimentation is key here.

Some people will choose to keep meal sizes and frequency the same everyday and that is fine. However, I also think being adaptive, understanding our own biofeedback and fueling our body when the demand is higher, then pulling back when the demands are less – not only gives your digestive system a chance to repair and recover, but also allows you to really maximize how you feel and perform through training, recovery, and every day life.

CHAPTER 10: Workout Day Nutrition

(Nutrition & Nutrient Timing - Pre/Intra/Post)

Now here is where the real change lies. Like I said in the previous chapter, most people think of diet and exercise as two separate entities and don't always know how to synergize the two – whether it is a vegan or non-vegan diet.

It isn't rocket science either (it's actually very simple), but people always overcomplicate things. Always. So let's dig down and get to simplicity.

One of the biggest misconceptions out there is that you need to change the food sources from a bulk to a cut to achieve the desired result – like I've said over and over in this book.

Simply not true.

In fact, if the food remains the same, it actually gives you more ability to dial your conditioning in even more.

Why? Because you already know how your body is reacting with those foods, you already know your biofeedback from those foods, so portion adjustment is all that is required.

So what do you do?...

Again, once you have your meal frequency down + your meal timing (which will usually pivot around your workout) you can 'reverse engineer' everything from that point. Think of your meal timing and frequency around your workout as the skeleton of your plan – the muscles and 'body' of your plan are the meals that fill that skeleton. Reverse engineering your nutrition is simple and all it means is you work backward from the end result.



My Example:

My nutrition around my training is like clockwork. The same or similar foods for each meal, same times, often the same portions, and when I do that consistently I get such a close dial on how my body reacts that all it takes is minor changes, like a subtle portion change for one meal, to see results.

As I mentioned earlier, through my own biofeedback I learned that I train best in the morning, and I also learned I train best on an empty stomach. I then use the meal structure I mentioned in the previous chapter revolving around a post workout shake and post workout meal. Beyond that I have 3-4 other meals around similar times during the day, usually consisting of similar foods and portions. Through that consistency I get a very close handle on what my body can take.

That's the name of the game here. To be able to dial your nutrition in so much that, all you need to do is change one meal slightly to begin seeing results, and I will show you how.

So when you are reverse engineering your workout day nutrition you need to factor in:

- Meal frequency
- Meal timing
- Training time
- Training workload/Output
- Your goal – Fat loss/Maintenance/Muscle gain
- What kinds of foods for each meal (In the index of this book I will list out my own personal suggestions for certain food groups for each meal so you can begin working with that to fill out your plan with appropriate foods for each time)

The first step is knowing when you will train. Aim to

build consistency around that time because from there you can gravitate everything around that training time. Say for instance you want to workout in the morning or evening, the first meals to put in place will be your Pre and Post workout meals. Those are like two bookends that block off your training session.

This means the meals on the outer limits AKA the furthest away from your training time (anything outside that pre and post workout meal window) can be arranged in a way that suits you. Think of them as periphery meals that outline the rest of your diet.

Back to my initial point one more time! – People often think they have to change the kinds of foods they eat from a bulk to a cut. You don't. When you want to change your goal, start manipulating your peripheral meals, as they aren't quite as important as the pre/post workout fuel – they still matter! But you can modify them first.

In summary, you have two strategies depending on if you are trying to gain muscle or drop fat – one is subtly pulling back on your portions while STILL eat the SAME foods. Where most go wrong is they change the foods all together and then have to go through another ‘recalibration phase’, to see how their body reacts – i.e. going from eating large amounts of carbs to a low carb diet to try and drop fat. NOT necessary!

Believe that, implement this, and watch it WORK.

The other strategy is to pull back on some of the more calorically dense foods and add in additional lower calorie vegetables to your plate within my periphery meals. This is what I do – so the food groups remain the same. Still eat your rice, your beans, your lentils or your avocado – whatever it is, just taper the portions back a touch and add a slightly larger portion of salad or green vegetable stir fry to your plate. This way you are still

drawing yourself into a slight caloric deficit to lose fat, but adding enough volume to your diet, that you don’t feel as hungry, get as many cravings, and it will help slow your digestion down further, so you don’t need to eat so much. That is the key.

Sustainability, patience, and consistency win every single time. Period.

Alternatively, if you want to build muscle the opposite applies where you simply add in larger portions or more calorically dense foods to your plate.

The key is simplicity. Some of you might read this and think this is all very basic, you seem to be repeating yourself from chapter to chapter. That there are no graphs and number formulas etc. – what the hell?! Well guys, THAT is why it works. Because people always overcomplicate simple concepts to the point they either take the wrong action or no action, leading to typically poor results.

So think in terms of simplicity. Build a baseline.

What time do you train?

From there you have your pre and post workout meal times – so go to the suggested food lists and choose some foods to test for those meals, using your biofeedback cues to assess if they are optimal.

Based on your goal, calculate how many approximate calories you are eating right now, first. From there plug in the new foods and work backwards – if your goal is fat loss you want to be slightly UNDER that calorie goal. Likewise, if it is muscle growth – go slightly OVER your current food intake.

From there you can decide how many other meals you will have and what times you want to have them each day. Then use the suggested food lists to build those meals out with portion sizes and food choices around your current goal.

Do this for a week and each week take measurements and recalibrate based on the changes you see.

That my friend, really is simplicity in a nutshell.

People stress over the right amount of protein, fat, and carbs, and they get totally lost in the numbers. Like I talked about in previous chapters with macros, work backwards and pay attention to biofeedback. So start with your total calorie intake and then begin to dial it in from there each week based on your own feedback.

The truth is MOST people will get more than enough protein, fats, and carbs, plus minerals and vitamins if the bulk of their diet is whole, plant-based foods.

Simplicity. Focus on it. Follow through.

CHAPTER 11: Refeeds/Non-Tracking Meals/Days

(Nutrition & Nutrient Timing On Refeed Days)

Re-feeds! What are they?

First off, NO they are not an open season to binge your face off. Very often I've seen people re-word their emotional binge sessions as re-feeds and I say "No!", call it for what it is.

That is not a re-feed at all. Be clear about that. For many people the idea of a re-feed or a free meal can lead to disordered eating so it's important to recognize that from the get-go. But, if done right it can actually heighten fat burning potential, help increase your output and performance, and help you preserve and build muscle depending on the goal.

So what is a 're-feed' / free meal or a non-tracking meal? It is essentially a spike or a peak in calories that is above and beyond your normal eating pattern. The point of it in simple terms is to help re-stimulate the metabolism and spike fat burning hormones such as Leptin back up to full capacity.

See, very often as we diet down in a calorie restriction, performance decreases and that affects our mood, discipline, and over all calorie expenditure. As our calorie expenditure dips, fat burning becomes a slow, more grueling process, so this is where a strategic re-feed comes in to play.

It can also help you adhere more closely to a diet plan long term, when you know you have mental freedom at certain points to deviate from the standard diet.

I have personally been using this for YEARS now and have managed to get down to low, single digit body fat levels, but it is very contextual too – which means depending on different variables your re-feed capability will vary. I also want to note you do NOT have to use this method, but I find it helps for me and many of my clients, so it is a useful tool in the toolbox at the very least.

So let me explain it further...



First off, what does a re-feed even look like?

It is a meal that is more calorie-dense and often carbohydrate-dense than your average meals. It could be your favorite vegan pizza, or a vegan burger with fries, a big plate of plant-based sushi, or even a slice of plant-based nut-cheese cake. It is often called a 'cheat' meal but I hate that term, because it implies its not part of a good plan – and it is. Also called a treat or free meal, which I think is a better term, almost like a 'dietary break' from the normal eating routine that is PLANNED and purposeful.

So think of it as a treat, something fun, a new recipe, something a bit more indulgent...like this delicious campfire refeed! Mmmm....vegan s'mores!





Secondly, how do you know how much to have?

This like everything else in the book is very contextual. If your goal is muscle building you can be a bit more flexible with the portion sizes, however if your goal is cutting you do need to have a reasonable handle on your portions. In our Fat Apocalypse training groups (our vegan fat burning program) we often suggest between 100-150g of carbohydrate for women and 150-200g of carbohydrate for men as a baseline for projected fat loss. As for fat calories in the food, just be diligent to some degree and obviously don't consume 1000's of calories over your normal intake, but also don't stress about it from day one.

Don't over think the process too much, as you will begin to get a grasp on your re-feeding capacity after a few attempts and observing your weight fluctuate combined with your biofeedback cues.

Things to consider when re-feeding are:

- Your current body composition and goal. If you are higher in body fat and/or have less muscle mass you just need to make sure your re-feed portions are a bit smaller like a 'suggested serving size' on the box or recipe. Like I said earlier, if your goal is cutting or fat loss, you do need to be a bit more specific with this.
- Your output/performance – this is key and I will talk about how to structure a re-feed around workouts, but even to this day I tend to avoid re-feeding on a 'rest day / non workout day'. I will always synergize my training and re-feed with the hardest workout of the week, I will explain this a bit more later.
- Frequency and timing – depending on the previous variables, this will then dictate how often you re-feed and what time of day around your training. For instance, a super active body builder adding muscle might be able to re-feed 2-3 times a week and, with the right portions, see amazing results. Likewise, someone who is new to plant based body-building, or bodybuilding in general and has more body fat or less muscle might re-feed once a week or even once every two weeks.

Like structuring out your diet plan, re-feeds will be part of that. If you notice your measurements go up the following days after a refeed, don't be alarmed – this is usually added water retention and glycogen, it will level out in the following days.

However, if you see no results or seem to go backwards from your goal over a couple of weeks, it is clear you are either re-feeding too often or your portions and food choices are not in alignment with the goal (too much). So address that first and foremost and gently taper the portions back or cut the frequency down. You have two options right there to trigger more results, so use them.

When I structure my re-feed I ask myself these questions:

- What is my goal - muscle building or cutting? And am I making controlled progress to that goal or am I setting myself back?
- What has my diet looked like this past week? Has it been on point or have I been a bit loose with it?
- What day do I want to perform the most in the gym? Or what workout do I want to fuel the most recovery from?

Example:

One week I might have been more 'flexible' with my diet and because of that I didn't need as much of a re-feed to perform at a high level in the gym with the added calories, so instead of have a large re-feed the evening before my hardest session, I will go into that session running on the excess calories I ate this week and then fuel some additional recovery with a smaller re-feed after that hard workout.

In another instance, I might have been on point with my diet all week and feel a touch depleted if I am cutting body fat. I want to be able to perform at a high level for my hardest workout (because remember, increased performance = increase calorie expenditure = increased fat burn) so I will have a larger re-feed the night before my hardest workout, which will fuel optimal performance and strength the following morning during that workout.

Make sense?

Now the key is to decide if you want to re-feed after your hardest workout or before. I tend to re-feed before, so I can perform at a high level, but everyone is different. So try both methods and listen to your biofeedback to see what resonates most with you.



Finally, what kind of training should I do around my re-feed?

I always suggest to train large muscle groups around a re-feed. So for myself, it is usually legs or back. Remember, larger muscle groups expend more energy (calories)/glycogen, which means in order to perform or recover you need additional fuel.

I always urge my clients to avoid re-feeding on a non-workout day or a day where they are doing smaller, accessory exercises because it is just setting you up for a sub-optimal hormone response. Like I talked about in previous chapters around nutrient timing, depending on if you have trained or are resting, your body can potentially do very different things with the same foods you eat.

So if you re-feed on a rest day, there is a good chance your glycogen stores are maxed out, and this overflow of nutrition will be stored in your fat cells, via insulin to clear the sugar out of your blood stream.

Yet on a hard training day, you empty those glycogen stores in the form on exercise and as the food is converted to sugar and reaches your blood stream, insulin will shuttle the nutrients into muscle cells to refuel glycogen and begin the recovery process. Can you see how timing matters now?

It's what separates people with poor or normal results from the ones who get great results.

Which one do you want to be?

My ideal re-feeds are often one of these options:

- Cashew or coconut ice cream
- Veggie-burger and home made fries
- Fettuccine/pasta dish
- Nut cheese cake
- Or an additional or larger portion of one of my normal meals

But it can really be anything plant based and it doesn't have to be processed. It can be a healthy dish too and I always, ALWAYS encourage that first and foremost. If you have an amazing vegan restaurant near you, a refeed could be the perfect opportunity to enjoy visiting there and enjoying foods that you wouldn't normally have at home.

Back to simplicity though – if you are trying to lose body fat, have a long way to go, and don't train long or hard yet, you need to re-feed less with smaller portions. If you have a lot of muscle mass and train long, hard hours you can refeed with larger portions or more frequently.

Simple cues to know if you have over done your refeed:

- Lethargy and brain fog because the meal was too large or had too much processed junk in it.
- Lack of results. If you don't see yourself moving toward your goal, address the re-feed.

It's that simple. Read your own biofeedback and adjust accordingly.

So decide if you want to experiment with this and test it:

- Before your hardest training session or after. I often schedule my hardest session on Saturday so I can re-feed on Friday coming into the weekend, and I can also rest a bit more from such a hard workout on Saturday - so synergize your training protocol around your eating too.
- Experiment with portion size and re-feed frequency. You will know if the portions are too large or too often because you will gain fat or see no fat loss at all. So be willing to recalibrate each time to find your metabolic sweet spot.
- What types of foods add to your performance and which ones make it worse? I have done a re-feed with processed junk before and my performance was notably worse (no surprise). Alternatively, a cleaner re-feed with the same amount of calories (with healthy food) and the performance was through the roof.

Take home point is the kinds of foods you eat matter too. Remember your biofeedback cues, if you are adding inflammation and negatively effecting hormone levels, you won't perform as well. So when thinking about a re-feed take into account the kind of foods you eat too and build a list of good re-feeds that have helped you perform well and helped get you closer to your goal.

Re-feeds can be a great tool for sanity and progress if used right. They can also be abused and I suggest if you struggle with food disorders that you are weary and take it slow as food disordered people can often over feed or under feed then binge eat. So be aware of this.

If you have no issue with disorder eating or have it under control, then utilize this strategy. I am a firm believer it works wonders when done right, as long as you synergize it with your hard workouts in conjunction with your goal and biofeedback.

So pay close attention to the biofeedback and design a re-feed protocol into your plan once a week around your hardest workout. ONE meal – not a re-feed day, not a binge session, one meal planned into your plant strong routine.

THE RESULT OF
RE-FEEDS DONE
RIGHT!



EVOLVING
ALPHA

CHAPTER 12: Carb Cycling/Carb Manipulation - Is It Necessary?

(How To Tweak Macros To Lean Out Or Build Mass)

Carbohydrate (carb) cycling and carbohydrate depletion are methods bodybuilders use to drain glycogen and excess water from their body to force the body to tap into excess fat stores and keep water weight/water retention low. This gives the body a more defined, leaner, vascular appearance.

The question you need to ask is, “Is all this really necessary?”

For a long time I felt like it was, but after going vegan and increasing my carbohydrate intake to about 60% of my total calories, I feel like it just isn't

the case – at least with myself personally.

Essentially that is what a good part of this book is; my personal experience with my own physiology and clients over years and years of trial and error.

Now does that mean it makes this book irrelevant for you? Not at all. Fundamentally we are all very similar, and the steps I've used can be translated into a system your own body understands too.

So what is the best way to carb cycle?

My most simplistic suggestion would be to synergize your nutrition with your training. So on rest days or days where you train smaller muscle groups or muscle groups that are your genetic strengths - you can taper your carb intake back, this way pulling your total calorie intake back a touch. This is similar to what I talked about in previous chapters around learning how to synergize your calorie intake with your workouts. That is the key with carb cycling.

Likewise on days where you train hard, or expend a lot of energy, you can increase your carb load (and overall calorie load) to spike your glycogen replenishment. A really hard carb load would be a 're-feed' (like the previous chapter discussed), but you may not need to always do this.



Here is an example of what you could do in terms of a carb cycle coinciding with a training split:

Monday	Shoulders & Biceps	Medium Carb
Tuesday	Chest & Triceps	High Carb
Wednesday	Legs / Calves	Medium Carb
Thursday	Back / Biceps	Low Carb
Friday	Full Body / Or Lagging Muscle Groups	High Carb / Re-feed
Saturday	Rest	Low Carb
Sunday	Rest	Medium Carb

This is just a very basic example, remember that – but you can see how the days undulate around different muscle groups.

I suggested to place the ‘high day’ on a chest day to fuel your performance for leg day the following day so you can perform at a high level. Often after a high day to achieve a good fat burning zone you will taper back to a lower carb/calorie intake then undulate back up again.

You can see I suggest a re-feed on your ‘full body’ day, so you can really leave everything on the weight floor and replenish well.

Again, this is just an example; there are many ways to carb cycle. For example, coming up to a competition I often see competitors taper down into very low carbs then carb load in the days prior. I won’t say I have any real experience in competition prep, but what I do know is that most people screw up their conditioning by trying to manipulate too many variables in the week prior. They either under

carb and come into their show deflated, flat as a pancake, or they over carb and hold water, look bloated and lose all their conditioning.

A suggestion for a low, medium, and high day could be as simple as eating 200-400 calories below maintenance for a low day (by cutting your carb intake back). For medium days hit your maintenance level calories. Then on a high day consume 200-400 calories above maintenance, by introducing additional carbohydrate calories.

There are essentially two ways to carb cycle.

One is to add or remove carbs and keep fat and protein at a set amount – this also pushes you into a calorie cycle (periods of undulating calorie intake) which in some cases can help you get leaner and help optimize performance in the gym. So in simple terms – if you undulate your carb intake, but keep all other macronutrients at a set amount, that is also a ‘calorie cycle’. This is one method you can test and see how you feel implementing it.

The other method is to undulate carbs and as those carbs drop add in the equal caloric amount in the form of fats or protein. Then as your carbs peak up again, remove the same caloric amount of fats/protein too. This way your overall calorie intake is uniform and remains the same through the exclusion or inclusion of additional fats and protein to offset the undulating carb intake.

It might sound complex, but in reality it isn't.

The only thing that may take time is to 'dial it in'. When I say dial it in, I'm suggesting the time it takes to figure out how many carbs a high day, medium day, and low day should all be. Again, I gave approximate suggestions in an earlier paragraph so use those as a starting point first.



I often work this out by using a medium or 'normal' day FIRST. So that is just my baseline carb intake or maintenance level. You can figure this out with the previous chapters around biofeedback, calorie intake, and tweaking your fat and carbs to find your metabolic sweet spot around your goal (fat loss or muscle build).

That will be your baseline (medium day).

From there you can be as subtle or as aggressive as you want with the change for low and high days. What I mean by that is, you could taper back your carb intake by 200 calories on a low day and on a high day go to 200 over baseline. This is a subtle example.

A more aggressive example might be 500 calories below and 1000 calories over. It all depends on your goal and how far away you are from it, combined with how your body handles the calorie deficit and surplus.

All these concepts are more advanced and the first key is to get the basics right, THEN move to things like this. However these things aren't necessary to achieving a great result. They can be a tool in the arsenal, and it might work amazingly well for some people and poorly for others – again, biofeedback and progress markers will let you know this.

My method is much more simple and I want to share that with you also, so you have options to see what works best for you.

Often people overcomplicate processes trying to take shortcuts to better results – but very often it backfires leaving them with results much worse than if they kept things simple and uniform. The body tends to gravitate towards routine and breaking that uniformity when you train can be a good thing, but when it comes to nutrition it can sometimes throw your systems out of balance, making your body hold more water and lose definition, appearing flatter and less 'full' in terms of muscle density, than you really are.

For myself, now I keep things consistent. Which means outside of my re-feed, my calorie intake and macros tend to remain the same. If I were to diet down I would just subtly and slowly taper my total calories back, keeping my protein at a set amount and gently pulling back on fats first as they take up the most calories (9 calories per gram as opposed to protein or carbs, which are 4 calories per gram).

Then I would cut back carbs gently, as a second phase response if the fat reduction didn't offer enough fat loss. I would keep my caloric intake at a constant level, gravitating around a subtle deficit and as I get deeper into the cut, I pull my calories down a touch more each week.

Alternatively if I was adding muscle and size I would keep my re-feed in place and potentially even add a secondary smaller re-feed and taper my calories up – adding in more carbs and some fats based around my own biofeedback and what I feel I function and perform best on.

Can you see that sometimes keeping things simple and baseline allows you to get a good grasp on how your body responds?

*IF YOU MANIPULATE TOO MANY VARIABLES AT ONCE,
YOU NEVER KNOW TO WHICH ONE YOUR BODY IS
RESPONDING POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY.*

Simplicity also means that come show time, your body is familiar with the stimulus and nutrition and you just have to make minor tweaks to dial your conditioning in. The fundamental thing to remember is that if you cut for fat loss slow enough and you get lean enough you won't need to manipulate carbs as aggressively to look good for the show.

Likewise if you are trying to add muscle, push yourself into a calorie surplus with a good ratio of carbs to fats, based on your biofeedback, to really grow while still staying relatively lean.

The most important thing to remember is that this can work, but you have to test it. Sometimes keeping it simple so you can get a good grasp on your metabolism is key.

So address the basics first, then take this on. Coincide your calorie and carb spikes with harder training sessions, and on rest days taper it back. Based on your goal and current body composition you can test how many low / medium (baseline) / high days you will need.

Everyone will be different, but start off subtly with a slight carb/calorie dip or surplus and if you see good results get more aggressive with it until you feel like you've found your metabolic sweet spot.

In the end, simplicity is always the goal. So if this seems too technical, either ask me for additional help via custom plans or our Vegainz 12 Week Muscle builder and we can nail it, or keep it simple and baseline around a constant calorie/carb intake.



CHAPTER 13: Losing Fat And Gaining Muscle At The Same Time?

Whether or not you can lose fat and build muscle at the same time is a commonly debated and seemingly confusing topic. In reality only because people love to make things complicated! (As I've said often in this book!)

It's really quite simple, so let me break it down for you.

The only real time you can do what I call a 'total body re-comp' - where you literally lose fat and gain muscle AT THE SAME TIME - is if you are a beginner, if you are taking a very long-term lifestyle approach, or if you use performance enhancing drugs.

As a beginner when you have created no real stimulus for muscle growth before and have never weight trained and/or have fat to lose – you are so far from your true genetic potential, that even the smallest introduction of a new stimulus such as lifting weights, can create body re-composition.

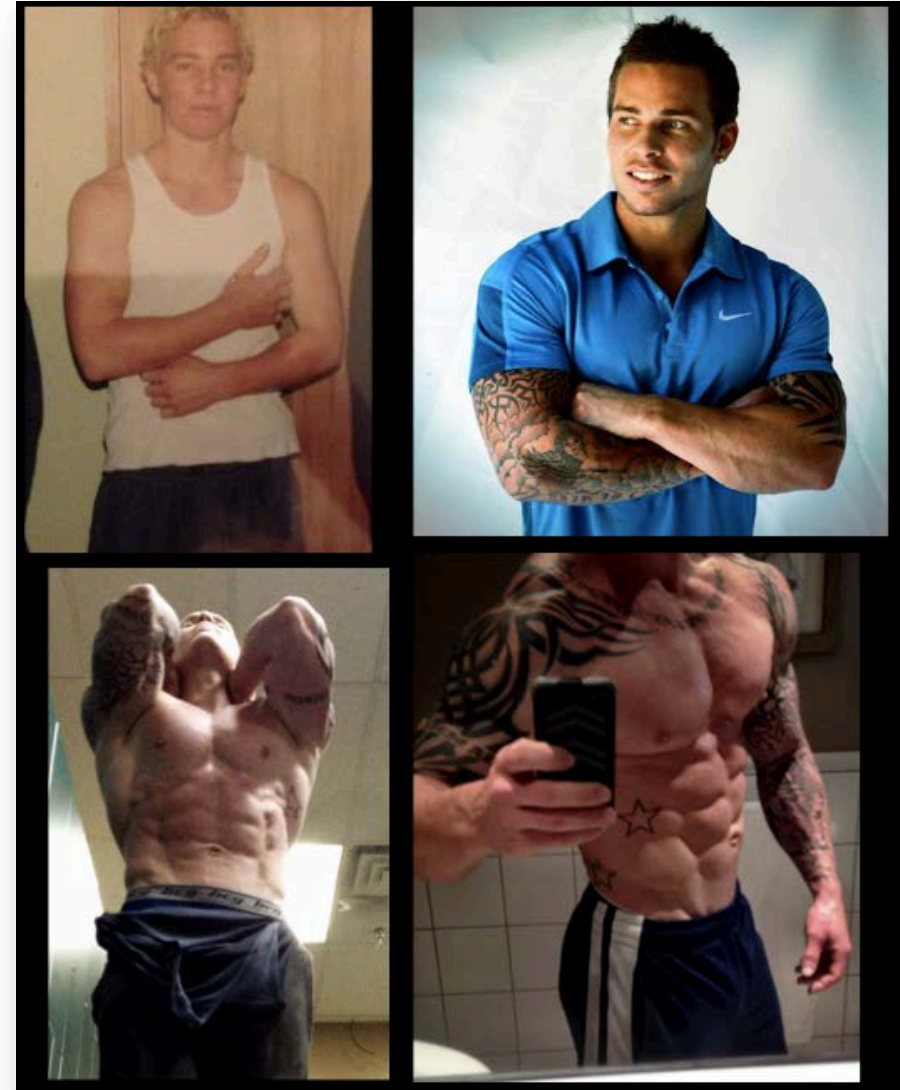
I see this all the time with our beginner clients, who run DEXA scans and InBody readings and it literally shows muscle mass increase with fat loss occurring at the same time within a given time frame. The challenging part comes once you get beyond those 'beginner gains' and your body catches on to the stimulus (the weight training and dieting).

Then body re-composition at the same time isn't really a reliable or efficient option.

Some people might argue with this, but again these are my observations through my own experience and coaching thousands of people over the years.

Now, this doesn't mean you cannot toggle between a calorie surplus and calorie deficit for shorter periods to build muscle and then peel away fat. This is what I have done for years and it has helped me build a lot of muscle without ever getting fat.

Let me explain how.



I'm sure many of you have heard of 'bulking' and 'cutting' and I talk about it extensively in the previous chapters.

'Mini-cuts', or toggling as I call it, is simply 3-4 month periods of higher calorie (surplus) then 3-4 months of lower calories (maintenance or deficit) where by you work on a muscle-building phase for the duration of your calorie surplus trying to pack on as much new muscle mass as possible. Then during the deficit (cutting) phases you taper your nutrition back periodically and gradually torch your fat stores without tapping into muscle.

This is an art and the slower you go, the more muscle you will retain, generally speaking.

I prefer to do 6 months of calorie subtle surplus and 2-3 months of calorie maintenance with intermittent bursts of caloric deficit. This way I'm not in a calorie deficit for a prolonged period, which can impact your hormone function, sleep, strength, mental health and a myriad of other things. So by lacing the 'cut' with

maintenance calories for a period of time, the body seems to adjust to not being in a surplus first, before I then gently taper them down into a deficit. This helps to stabilize mood, cravings, and strength, so that you don't get the common 'depleted feeling' that comes with a dramatic cut.

I find that giving yourself 3-6 months to cut is always a good idea. Otherwise, if you try to do it too fast you will lose muscle mass in the process. Everyone will be different in this regard.

If you compete you will want to craft your surplus and deficits around competition timing. For me, I structure it around winter and summer. So as winter comes, I slowly add more calories back in – and even take a 'dietary break', where I don't eat garbage all day every day, but I don't track calories/portion sizes either. When I'm hungry I eat as much as I want until I'm relatively satisfied, but not stuffed. During this time, I assess my body composition each week to make sure I am slowing gaining weight, without getting too fat. It's a great psychological tool to allow your mind to reset for future fat loss.

I will then begin to taper my calories back down towards maintenance over a 1-2 month period, followed by a subtle deficit, and then work into the full cut.

If you do this every year you will notice how much muscle you can build, without getting fat. Some people will prefer to do 3-4 month bursts of bulk and cuts (2 of each per year), so find what works for you.

In summary you can use my bulking/muscle building caloric methods during those periods you want to build, then taper back into a deficit using the cutting methods I suggest. Do this right and you will really be able to build an amazing physique over time.

But realize that unless you are a beginner, you really do have to toggle between surplus and deficit to build muscle, even if it is short bursts of 3-4 months at a time.



CHAPTER 13: Intermittent Fasting And Fasted Training

Intermittent fasting (IF) has grown in popularity amongst the fitness industry in recent years for its apparent fat loss potential more than anything else. Isn't that always what gets people's attention?

So let me explain how this works, what it is, and how to use it to your advantage. Intermittent fasting (IF or fasting for short) is a period of time each day where you consume no nutrition (food or drinks containing calories). Of course you can drink water and plain tea, etc. – things with no caloric density, but during a 'fasted' period you consume no food or liquid calories. An example of a fasting period hardwired into all of us, is when we sleep.

We take this principle a little further by applying it to a period of time we are awake too. The opposing duration to a fasting window is your 'feeding window', the time that you consume calories. Everyone does fasting to some extent around their circadian rhythm (sleep pattern) but there are ways you can synergize your nutrition with this pattern to make fat loss an easier task to accomplish.

First off, you can still gain weight by intermittent fasting. You can still 'bulk' and do IF at the same time.

People don't realize that.

It's not how long you fast for that matters as much. It's how much you eat each day that does. So you could fast for 23 hours, but if you consume 5000 calories a day when your metabolic threshold is around 3000, you will get fat.

It's not that fasting will burn more fat, it's that condensing your eating window down can help control your appetite and how much food you consume, which helps with fat loss. It can also help optimize hormones such as insulin, growth hormone, sex hormones, and hunger hormones allowing you to get the most optimal results from your efforts.

So in saying that, let me explain when and how fasting can be a good tool to use – and I want to tell you first hand, you will NOT lose muscle mass training fasted if you do it right, I will explain how to do just that later in this chapter.



Some period of fasting is ideal when you are cutting or reducing calories into a deficit. I have found with many coaching clients, and myself, that we tend to have more discipline and self-control in the morning and seem to lack it in the afternoon and evening. So synergizing when you fast and when you feed around this inherent hunger can really make your diet protocol much easier to adhere too.

Here is an example:

Say you normally wake at 6am and have your first meal at 7am. By the time the afternoon rolls around you have already consumed a large portion of your daily calories and are forced to space your meals further apart to make them last until the evening, before you go to sleep.

If you condense your eating window down instead to 10am – 7pm, that extra 3-4 hours in the morning from waking until the time you eat, can make the

meals later in the day larger or closer together in timing. This technique can really help with self control, and hunger management, especially if you find that you get hungrier later on in the day.

It simply allows you to capitalize on not eating when you have more self-control, and then when you need more fuel, to be able to have larger meals or meals more closely together when you feel you need them. I find for many people this helps a lot with adherence to a program for the long term.

There are many different methods of fasting – you can search methods such as ‘Lean Gains’, ‘Eat Stop Eat’, and the ‘Warrior Diet’ – all with different fasting protocols. But understand these people are NOT vegan so take their fasting protocol and disregard the nutritional advice.

I personally have done some form of fasting for years now. Let me explain how and why I’ve done this.

Here is my routine - I train around 8am in the morning until 10am. I don't eat anything before I train. During my workout however, I do consume coconut water mixed with regular, filtered water and sometimes BCAA's (so its not a true fast, but close to it). I use this just to bump up my performance and act as a muscle buffer to protect muscle stores. You do not have to do this, but I've found it helps my performance and endurance in the gym.

By replacing those lost electrolytes and shuttling amino acids to the muscles during training it allows me to push harder for longer – which for me is always the goal, and it should be for you too.

After my workout I then supplement with 20g of a plant based protein in water, before getting home and having my post workout meal. By this time it is about 10.30am.

Granted I have taken in some calories during my training but they are very minimal. For years I just

Consumed BCAA's without the coconut water with no detrimental effects to fat loss. In hindsight now - I would even suggest now that supplementation isn't even necessary at ALL to maintaining and building muscle. Following the food guidance that I've already provided in this book is far more important and impactful to your results.

People will freak out and often ask, “But what about my muscle, wont I burn muscle?”. For one, most people train nowhere near hard enough to ever tap into muscle stores. Secondly, if you have your nutrition dialed in the day before you will actually enhance your workout performance.

How?

See when we train in a fasted state the body releases high levels of adrenaline, which help us perform at a top level and also help tap into fat stores as energy. When we eat, that adrenaline response gets blunted by insulin production, which is used to shuttle nutrients to muscles or fat stores.

The two work hand in hand, when insulin is up – adrenaline is down and vice versa.

So if done right, you can glycogen load the muscles enough the day before that you don't warrant eating before your morning workout. Combine that with adrenaline, and it all helps enhance fat loss.

Also from a nutrient shuttling stand-point, people tend to eat too close to their workouts and their body sends a large volume of blood to the digestive system to break down and assimilate food. This results in impaired blood flow to muscles, lungs, heart, and brain – which all aid in optimal performance. I've actually found that when I've eaten too close to a workout, I've been weaker and more lethargic than when I've been in a fasted state. Again, this is my own biofeedback, it may not ring true for you – but it's on you to test it.



Now is fasting optimal for building muscle?

In my own experience the main thing that matters is that you get ENOUGH calories into your diet each day – which will dictate how you build muscle or cut body fat. Some people will operate well in a fasted state, others will not. It's an individual thing and again it comes back to reading your biofeedback, but also giving your body some time to adapt.

You may not feel amazing the first week doing it, but given time you may adapt and thrive doing it, so I say give it 2-4weeks minimum.

Fasting isn't as important when trying to build muscle, as you don't want to be in a calorie deficit. So adding in more meals helps with that goal. That being said, even when I 'bulk' I still train fasted, because I find that I just perform better in this state anyway.

Other people might find they struggle to get enough calories in, in which case you may need to have a meal before your morning workout (2+ hours before) in order to maximize the time you are awake to consume enough caloric load.

Can you see how it can be an individual thing, but there are so many options and variations?

If you train in the evening, it would be much harder to do fasted training because you would either have to not eat all day (which some people do with great results), or eat a lot of meals during the night after you train.

Let's just say it's not ideal and if you have the option to train in the morning in order to fast – do that. If you have to train in the evening, then just have your pre-workout meal at least 2 hours before you train.

Take home points on fasting & fasted training:

- If you eat enough the day prior you will have enough glycogen stored in muscle to perform at a high level the following morning.
- BCAA's may help control appetite in the morning if you are hungry and you can use them during workouts to act like a buffer while in a fasted state if you want, but it's not necessary – just your preference.
- I often use coconut water during my training. Now it's not a 'true fast', but it's low in calories and very rapidly absorbed and I find for my level of training it helps.
- You can cut or bulk and still fast at the same time, depending on your calorie intake for the day.
- It can be a useful tool when cutting or in a deep cut to maximize the morning, when most people have the most discipline and then condense the eating window down, so the meals are larger and/or you eat more frequently later in the day – which helps with self control and the ability to stick to your cut.
- You don't need to use it while bulking, but based on your own biofeedback you may find you feel stronger and more alert in a fasted state even during a bulk. Just be sure to get in surplus calories after your workout window.

CHAPTER 14: Gut Health For Maximum Absorption To Fuel Muscle Growth

(It's About Quality Over Quantity)

Gut health is one of the most widely overlooked aspects of bodybuilding and muscle development.

Get it right and it makes your quality of life so much better.

Remember this concept – it isn't the quantity of food we eat that matters as much as the quality of the food we eat! Essentially, you aren't only what you eat – you are what you ***absorb***.

Think of it like this...

Your gut is the gateway to how your body utilizes nutrients. If you have poor gut health your absorption of the nutrients you eat is dramatically impaired, meaning you simply don't utilize as much of it. This then has a cascading effect on hormone levels, neurotransmitter production, and metabolism.

This means that you may be operating on sub-optimal hormone levels trying to build muscle or even burn fat all because of poor gut health. And that will lead to not-so-great results.

Muscle growth relies on nutrients being shuttled to muscle cells. If your gut absorption is poor, that means less nutrients being shuttled to those cells to repair and create an anabolic environment.

In fact, poor gut health can create a high-stress, *catabolic* environment, which is the antithesis to building muscle and being healthy. Definitely not where we want to be.

A lot of people do not realize this.

They eat food, they train and they don't factor in all the pieces beyond just calories and exercise.

Think of your gut as the spark plug in your engine.



That spark plug could be clean and run smoothly like a healthy gut, and start the engine cleanly every time. Likewise a dirty, carbon-covered spark plug will stall and lack the energy needed to start the engine and turn things over.

Your gut is similar in nature. Your engine might still start, but it doesn't always mean it's running optimally either. In fact MOST people's engines are running poorly, they just don't know it.

So, what are some of the main things that are detrimental to gut health and what can you do about it?

Well, here are some common offenders:

- Antibiotics
- Antacids
- Alcohol
- Processed junk foods
- Stress
- Poor or Lack of sleep

If deal with any of those fairly regularly, at some point your gut health has probably been impaired, which means you need to consume foods rich in natural probiotics to repopulate your gut and help increase nutrient absorption.

Foods and drinks such as:

- Kombucha
- Kimchi
- Sauerkraut
- Miso
- A good vegan probiotic
- Fermented coconut yoghurts
- A diet predominantly of whole plant foods

Also lifestyle techniques such as:

- Stress management
- Adequate sleep



So the take home point is, realize that optimizing your gut health will optimize your nutrient uptake to your cells, which helps with fat loss and muscle growth. Beyond that, there is a strong connection between poor gut health and mental illness, brain fog, poor concentration, and lethargy via the Vagus nerve that connects the gut to the brain.

So in saying all this, it is vital that you incorporate fermented food into your diet regularly and minimize all the detrimental things I suggested earlier.

Signs your gut is impaired:

- IBS
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Lethargy
- Poor sleep
- Bloating
- Excess gas
- Poor concentration

It is also important to learn your biofeedback cues like I suggest all throughout this book (and some of the cues lie in this list I just laid out). There might be foods that inflame your gut, bloat you, and make you feel sub-optimal.

You either need to repopulate your gut flora or manipulate your food options a little bit to see how your body reacts to certain foods. One example is legumes or nuts. Some people do fine with them, others bloat and feel awful on them. So learn your biofeedback cues – so you can craft your diet to help heal your gut, not hinder it.

Beyond that, adding plenty of plant foods in, in the form of lots of colorful vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and legumes will always help balance mineral and vitamin levels, which in turn helps optimize your body even further.

It's also a given that I should say that animal products are generally quite inflammatory to our systems too. Which is another great reason for being Vegan!

CHAPTER 15: Hormone Health For Maximum Gains And Better Fat Loss

(Optimizing Your Software)

Hormone health ties into the previous chapter around gut health and this aspect of our physiology really is the KEY to ultimate muscle growth or fat loss, so I place a lot of emphasis on this chapter.

So buckle up and enjoy the ride. You are going to learn a lot.

The one common thread I see in people when looking to get huge results is diet plus exercise, equals “the result”. They often look at those two parts as separate entities, not realizing the two can

compliment each other. Because of this, the two often lack synergy. On top of that people miss a huge piece of the puzzle - *hormones and hormone health!*

Hormones essentially dictate how our body does everything on an operational level. Think of hormones as the software that drives our machine. They regulate how much muscle we build, how much fat we burn, AND where we burn it from. They also regulate how fast we age, our mental clarity, disease, sleep, energy levels, and so on.

Can you see how this 'hormonal software' plays a huge role in bodybuilding?

Now unless you are on performance enhancing drugs, you need to know how to maximize your natural hormone levels to optimize how your body grows and burns fat (and that way, you'll never need steroids).



Here is how...

But first off, I won't go into massive depth about the role of every single hormone, just the few fundamental ones, and I will try to simplify things as much as possible too. Otherwise it will get far too complex for the average reader.

A huge factor in muscle growth and body fat distribution is your sex hormone levels - these being Estrogen, Testosterone and Progesterone. In women, estrogen and progesterone are the primary sex hormones and they are the fundamental hormones that make women, women.

They also play a role in fat storage and fat distribution too. Think of a women when they are pregnant - their body fat levels rise. This is because their estrogen increases during pregnancy to handle the extra calorie requirements of a growing, unborn child. So she will often store additional fat to cater for this need. This same principle applies in people who simply have elevated estrogen levels, men or women.

It means fat is stored more efficiently and at a higher rate. In women, often through the hips, butt, and thighs, and in men through the nipple and chest area as well as hips.

Balanced estrogen equals optimal fat storage and distribution and I will give some suggestions on how to do just that later in this chapter.

The other aspect of muscle building is Testosterone levels.

Now in men, these are much higher than in women, which is why you see men carrying far more muscle mass than most women do. It is the primary hormone that makes men, men.

Testosterone plays a huge role in muscle building because it increases how androgen receptors activate and increase protein synthesis, which is how the body uses nutrition and hormone levels to build new muscle tissue.

SO YES ONE PART OF THE PUZZLE IS TRAINING AND NUTRITION, BUT ANOTHER PART IS HOW YOUR HORMONE LEVELS OPERATE TOO!

Poor sex hormone function means sub-optimal body composition, and it will affect your brain chemistry and mental state too, if it is not addressed. Often people with poor sex hormone balance, have depression or other kinds of mental illness too. This is because sex hormone function ties in closely to brain chemistry – so it is worth getting that checked by your doctor.

I will address some key tips on how to optimize all these things at the end of the chapter.

The rest of the primary hormones are Cortisol, Adrenaline, Insulin, Thyroid and Leptin. There are others, but for the sake of keeping this book simple I will focus on these primary ones.

These hormones all play key roles in our health, which ties over to our body composition too.

Hormones such as cortisol regulate blood pressure and heart rate, and help bring us out of deep sleep, but they can also become dysfunctional leading to fat storage, high mental stress, and burn out - mentally or physically. It also affects how well we sleep and food cravings, which can be challenging when dietary adherence is important.

It is why helping regulate cortisol is key, and we do this through sleep, stress management, a whole foods plant based diet, and stimulant reduction.



Adrenaline is a hormone most people know.

It is that 'pump you up' hormone that kicks in when we feel fear, or are put in an acute situation. When you feel your heart rate skyrocket and all of a sudden you are alert and focused - that is adrenaline at play.

This hormone has a role in fat loss also and in modern society it's often out of control leading to adrenal fatigue and burn out.

Adrenaline is a prime fat burner during periods of fasting, when the insulin response is low. People might ask, well how does this impact my gains?

Well if you feel tired and burned out, you sure as hell aren't going to train as hard, or as long, or as intensely - so it really does affect things in a big way. It is a systemic response, when we don't feel well our motivation, strength, focus and drive all go down. Adrenal fatigue and burnout will also slow down your metabolism, making fat loss extremely difficult too.

Insulin is also a key player when it comes to getting results.

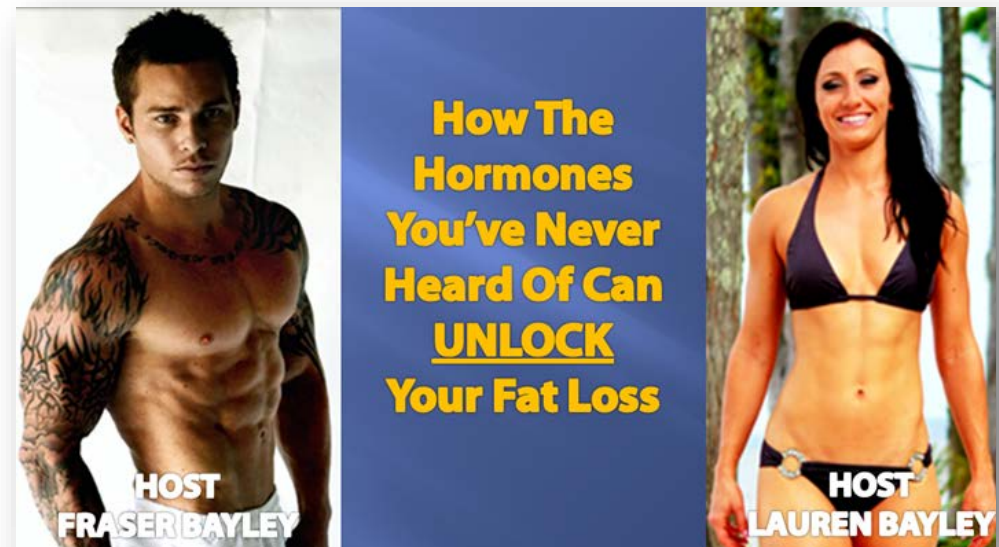
Remember how in previous chapters about nutrient timing I said that based on what you eat and when you train insulin can do very different things with those same nutrients? That it can either shuttle sugar to depleted muscle cells as glycogen, or into fat cells as excess energy. So knowing how to maximize insulin response can play a huge role in muscle growth (I explain this during the workout and non-workout day nutrition and nutrient timing chapters).

Insulin sensitivity is the key to optimal fat burning and nutrient utilization. On the other end of that spectrum, insulin resistance is the blunted response to insulin, which leads to high blood sugar, obesity and diabetes.

Thyroid hormones regulate metabolism. Think of them as your internal thermostat keeping your body temperature and systems running at an even pace.

Too high and they are over active (hyper), too low and they become underactive (hypo) - both of which can play a role in fat loss, energy levels, and mood.

I find this to be the case more so in women than men too. If you suffer from brittle nails, dry and thinning hair, cold extremities and constant bouts of fatigue it is worth getting your thyroid levels checked.



Ghrelin is our primary hunger hormone.

Think of the ‘growl’ you feel when you are hungry, that is Ghrelin calling. When our stomach is empty, or we aren’t getting enough food, signals from the digestive system to the brain tell us we need to seek out food. This can become problematic while dieting down, so strategies around maintaining high stomach volume with calorically light foods to keep stomach receptors switched off is the key. I will explain how to do this at the end of the chapter with the other hormone tips.



Leptin is our primary fat burning hormone along with adrenaline.

This hormone is triggered when we are in a ‘fed state’ and need to use energy (fat). This hormone seems to work synergistically with insulin, so if one is resistant and unresponsive the other tends to be the same. Therefore, with more Leptin resistance comes poorer fat burning capability, which is why addressing the combination of insulin and Leptin sensitivity is key.

I could go on in great depth about these hormones, but for the sake of keeping things reasonably simple and implementable I want to keep each point short and provide you with a few tangible steps you can take to optimizing your hormones. On the following page you’ll find a few primary things you can do to optimize your hormones and get them functioning well.

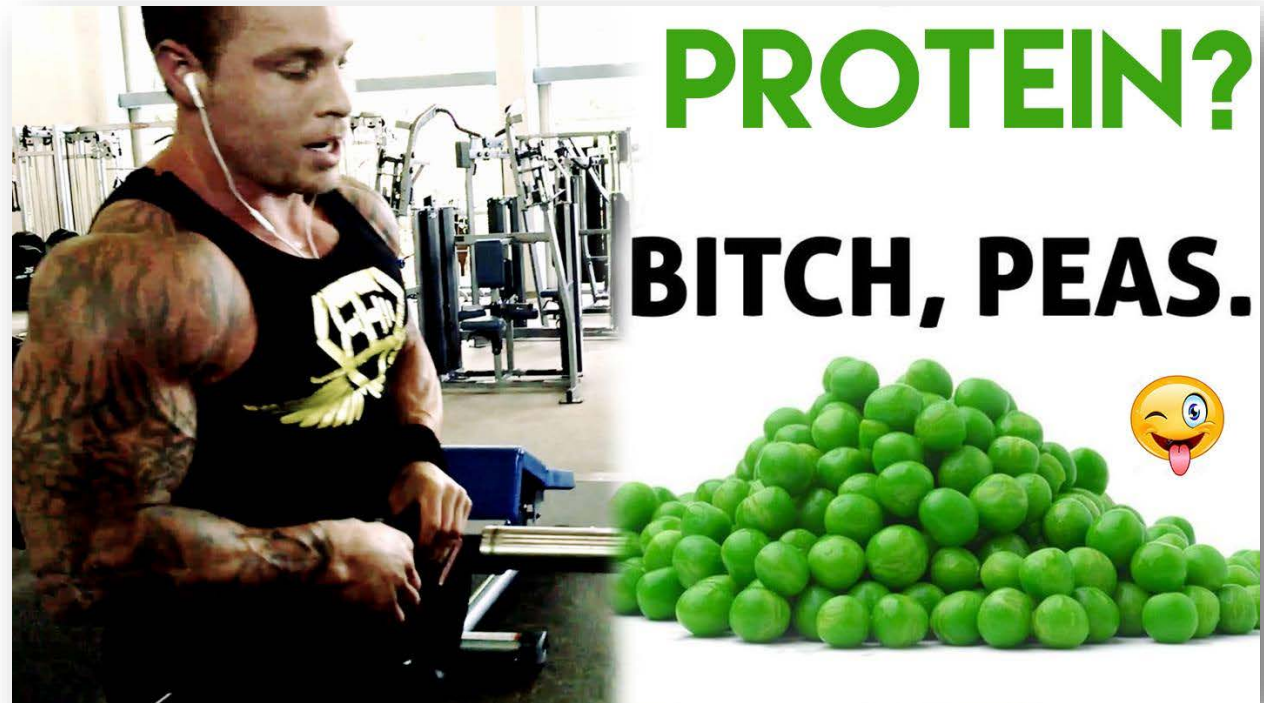
In some cases you might need to see a doctor to check things for you.

The best things you can do to optimize all of these hormones at once are:

- Sleep (8+ hours)
- Proper hydration (Water!)
- Whole foods plant-based diet with a higher ratio of whole food carbohydrates, lower protein, and lower fat for most people (Minimal junk food and processed foods too)
- Moderate caffeine intake or eliminate it
- Lots of green vegetables to help with hunger hormones
- Weight training with short rest periods for people with healthy adrenals
- Shorter training sessions and/or longer rest periods for people with weak adrenals
- Eating the right amount of calories for your goal (Practicing the art of not eating until you are totally 'full', always leave a small amount of space and hunger present as often as you can)
- Meditation / Leisure walking / Yoga (relief from mental stress)
- Intermittent fasting protocols
- Proper nutrient timing around your workout
- Eliminate alcohol
- Balanced range of nuts, seeds to optimize sex hormones
- Elimination of animal products

If you do these things, or a good proportion of these things consistently, you will optimize your hormone function and really maximize how your body builds muscle and burns fat.

These are methods I have used over the years, and through consistency with these methods, you can maximize your work effort in the gym and kitchen to achieve all your vegan body building goals.



CHAPTER 16: Training Fundamentals And Vital Keys

(How To Maximize Everything Through Training)

One of the most common things I see across the board when it comes to people not getting results is how they train.

From my own observations over the years I would say 95% of people do not even come close to training hard enough or consistently enough to stimulate any real kind of body change or muscle growth. They simply do not know how far outside their comfort zone they need to go to make this happen.

Put it this way if you aren't hitting your second to last and final rep and coming close to failure regardless of the weight, you just aren't training hard enough. Period.

Now it's not to say every workout session has to be a gut buster. Not at all. But realize that when you do feel good, you need to use that to your advantage and train **HARD!**

There is a scale called RPE, “Rated Perceived Exertion”, by which you can gauge your level of intensity. For example if you fail on the last rep of your sets that is a 10 RPE (the Max rating there is). If you hit 9 reps and feel like you could have got 10 reps that is a 9 RPE and so on. This scale is just a way to gauge your work effort and intensity.

An ideal RPE to shoot for is around 8-9 for most sets to really see significant change. I see most people sitting in a 5-6 RPE when doing their sets and it simply isn't enough to warrant muscle to grow the way they want. Remember, your body doesn't naturally want to get larger, it will only grow if the perceived work load is so high that it warrants a need to grow to handle that larger work load.

If you train within your current limits – it is where you will stay.

Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE Scale)	
10	Maximal
9	Really, Really, Hard
8	Really Hard
7	
6	Hard
5	Challenging
4	Moderate
3	Easy
2	Really Easy
1	Rest

I'm here to tell you first and foremost, if you want big results you have to train like an Alpha! - giving it your all. You have to leave everything on that weight floor. Not every session will be like this obviously, but over time you have to be able to thrive outside of your comfort zone and realize within the discomfort lies your maximum growth. Don't be fooled.

So let's dive into the fundamental ways to maximize how you train.

Yes, nutrition plays the largest role, but how you train also has a large impact on your results too, so let me break it down for you and explain how I train and why I feel this works the best.

The number one concept I want to drive home is **'compound lifts'** – and lots of them.

What are compound lifts? They are the big lifts – the ones that require the most joints to move at one single time.

Compound Lifts:

Squat

Deadlift

Stiff-leg deadlift

Lunges

Rows

Chest press

Pull ups

Over head press

I often see people avoiding the harder lifts, dead lifts, squats etc. because, lets face it – they are tough – they burn a ton of calories and really test your lung capacity. They also offer the highest return on investment too. I've noticed a density about my physique and others that do as I do, that other people do not have purely by doing those harder lifts, consistently. A deeper thicker back, thicker more powerful quads and glutes. Larger, stronger looking traps. All come from doing those hard lifts.

So your primary focus should hinge around starting your workouts with those hardest lifts first, get them out of the way, then move onto easier lifts and accessory work to finish.

So with that being said, what are the ideal rep ranges, rest times and training splits for maximum body composition change?

Personally I think focusing on a hybrid of strength and hypertrophy is the key when it comes to fat loss and muscle growth, why? Because to build more size, we need to mechanically overload muscles – one way to do this, is to get stronger amongst other things. So combining a strength and hypertrophy style workout together can really maximize those gains.



Currently in 2015 I do 3 days of strength work and 3 days of hypertrophy work in a split that I call “Push Pull Legs 1.0”. Where I perform one day of strength work and one day of hypertrophy work around all the ‘push’ movements like chest, triceps and many shoulder movements. On pull days I do all back and rear shoulder movements coupled with biceps. Leg day is obviously all lower body work.

I find as my strength climbs, so too does my muscle size and density. You don’t have to get stronger to necessarily get bigger, but it is the obvious progressive overload technique to use aside from more volume and time under tension, which I will discuss shortly.

How does this work?

On strength days I keep the rep count smaller, so depending on the muscle group I aim for anywhere between 2-6 reps with longer rest periods –

approximately 3-5 minutes between sets. I am aiming to move heavier weight and give my nervous system more of a chance to recover from each set. On hypertrophy days I shoot for 6-12 reps per set and keep rest periods around 45 seconds to 1 minute between sets, trying to overload the nervous system and pump blood to the muscles.

The strength days are geared around firing up the nervous system and moving weight to create progressively overload of the muscle. The hypertrophy days are more like ‘pump’ days, where you are looking to drive blood volume into the muscle, while keeping rest short to limit ATP recovery, which further helps with progressive overload of the muscle – via another route.

It’s a two-pronged approach and I find personally it works wonders and I have seen the effects of it on many others too.

In summary for maximum muscle growth your rep ranges should really be within 8-12, but combining some strength work with lower reps into that can help you get stronger at that 8-12 rep range, which helps further muscle growth.

Look, if all this sounds foreign to you, try out my Push Pull Legs 1.0 training split I'm using in 2015 on our website www.EvolvingAlpha.com. it covers all of this in detail. I also use an advanced, more periodized version of this training in my Vegainz 12 Week Muscle builder, also found on the website.

Let's carry on...

The screenshot displays the Plant Strong Fitness website. At the top, the logo "PLANTSTRONGFITNESS" features a heart-shaped apple icon. Below the logo is a green banner with a yellow arrow pointing right, the text "5 DIRT CHEAP VEGAN FOODS FOR FAT LOSS", and a yellow button labeled "Download Now" with a yellow arrow pointing left. The main heading is "Training And Nutrition Programs". Below this, a subtitle reads: "Plant Strong Fitness Training cycles And Customized Nutrition for Max muscle growth, Max fat loss and Max body change - brought to you by Fraser Bayley". Two program cards are shown: "VEGAINZ PLANTSTRONGFITNESS PUSH PULL LEGS 1.0" and "VEGAINZ PLANTSTRONGFITNESS BULKING CUTTING HYBRID PROTOCOL".

PLANTSTRONGFITNESS

5 DIRT CHEAP VEGAN FOODS FOR FAT LOSS [Download Now](#)

Training And Nutrition Programs

Plant Strong Fitness Training cycles And Customized Nutrition for Max muscle growth, Max fat loss and Max body change - brought to you by Fraser Bayley

VEGAINZ
PLANTSTRONGFITNESS

PUSH PULL LEGS

1.0

VEGAINZ
PLANTSTRONGFITNESS

BULKING CUTTING

HYBRID PROTOCOL

You can do a traditional bodybuilding split like chest, shoulders, back, legs, arms etc. and that can work wonders if done right too. I find that I expend more calories and get more work and volume on each muscle with a push pull leg routine, but again, each can work wonders if you take your training beyond your comfort zone.

The reality is – almost any training plan works, but it comes down to how hard you work for it.

Some of the advanced techniques for creating overload I've found very helpful when it comes to fat loss and muscle growth are:

Drop sets

This is a great progressive overload technique I use, where by you start off with your max weight for that set and hit the particular rep count. Then drop that weight and go right to the next weight on the same exercise, with no rest, and hit your rep count on that

lesser weight too. You can drop set multiple times within one 'set' and it's a great overload technique for getting blood into the muscle.

I generally use these techniques during hypertrophy days.

Super Sets/Giant sets

These are when you combine two or more different exercises back to back that compliment each other with little to no rest. An example would be a Lat pull down with a straight-arm pull down. The idea is to synergize the way two muscles work or to just overload the body with sheer workload. A brutal superset example is a squat and a dead lift back to back. Great for sheer fat burning potential.

Post/Pre Exhaustion Techniques

This technique is where you combine a synergistic compound lift with a complimentary isolation movement. Isolation movements are targeted

exercises whereby only ONE joint is moving, like a quad extension or bicep curl.

A post exhaustion example is where you perform a stiff leg dead lift to stimulate the glutes and hamstrings, then go right into a hamstring curl to further push blood volume into the hamstring muscle, which helps muscle growth. You can alternatively do this in the other direction too, by starting with hamstring curls, overloading the target muscle, then go into stiff leg dead lifts. Try both methods, the later one means you won't be able to move as much weight, but you are still creating overload in the muscle, which if fueled with the right nutrition will grow.

Forced reps / Negatives

You generally need a spotter for these reps. They are reps where you get assisted through the concentric (contractile) portion of the rep, so you can overload the eccentric portion of the rep.

This is a great tool for busting through plateaus, but they will and do overload the nervous system, so use them periodically within a good plan.



TUT (Time Under Tension)

The “Time Under Tension” is how long your muscles are contracting under weight. If lifting heavy is something you want to avoid, for joint preservation, or pre-existing injury reasons, then focusing more on TUT is key.

It allows you to lift a lighter weight, but by slowing the reps down more – you add more tension to the muscle. See muscle doesn’t understand ‘weight’, it responds to tension which is a form of progressive overload. So if your normal rep count is 2 seconds up 1 second down try doubling that to 4:2. That is adding TUT to the mix to create a form of overload on the muscle.

Great for beginners or people who have no desire to lift heavy.

Density Training

Density training in a nutshell is exercise within a time constraint. I generally superset two different lifts and set a timer for a predetermined amount – say 6-10 minutes. Normally you want to shoot for about 8-12 reps per exercise and jump back and forth between each exercise, without resting during the time set on your timer.

It is a great warm up routine or a good addition if fat loss is your goal as you can get a lot of volume done, in a very short time, which puts a lot of overload on the muscle. During a cutting phase I will usually superset two exercises and use this routine as my warm-up.

Tension bands

The addition of tension bands can be a great plateau breaker and help target certain areas of the strength curve for overload. This is more of an advanced technique – so get the basics right first - but you can loop bands on barbells and anchor them to the ground or above your head (via a chin up bar for instance or the top of a squat rack) to overload different movements.

An example is anchoring bands to the top of the squat rack while doing barbell squats. This allows you to move more weight and it assists you at the bottom portion of the movement, when you are mechanically most vulnerable. I like these because it helps prevent lower back burn out, and as you go up through the squat pattern, you lose tension on the bands adding more tension to the muscle – great if you want to overload the quads at the top of the lift.

Likewise, with a bench press you can anchor bands to the floor/under the bench and it allows for more tension at the top end of the lift, overloading your lockout and triceps.



Rest Pause

These sets are essentially a series of micro-sets within one larger set. It allows you to lift more weight, to overload the muscle and take short breaks, enough to recover a small amount of strength, but not enough to fully recuperate.

For example if you normally do 225lbs on the bench press for 8 reps. You can bump it up to 265lbs and shoot for 10 reps. You might get 4 reps at first, rack it and rest for 15 seconds. Then do another 4, rack it and rest, then the final micro set might be 2 reps. That way you not only lift more weight, but you do more reps too – that is a double overload on the muscle.

These are tough and sometimes require a spotter, but adding rest pause sets into a routine can really help you overload for muscle growth on two fronts.

Eccentrics

I've found focusing on the eccentric portion of a lift just as much, if not more so, than the concentric portion works wonders for building muscle.

First note that we are mechanically stronger during the eccentric (expansion/stretch) portion of a lift, than we are during the concentric portion (contraction / shortening). For example, during a lat pull down, contract the weight down at the normal tempo, but then add an extra second or two on the way up. Feel the stretch and control the release of the tension through the eccentric portion.

Same principal with bench press – explode up, but control and counteract the weight on the way down. It is simply another form of overload that doesn't require you adding more weight to the bar, but still helps you build muscle.

Mechanical Advantage

Mechanically we are stronger in different planes and movements than others.

How can you capitalize on the idea of mechanical advantage to overload a muscle?

It all comes down to angles and planes.

A good example is an incline dumbbell bench press on an adjustable bench. If you begin with that bench on a steep incline you will be hitting predominantly upper chest and shoulder fibers and you won't be able to lift as much weight as if you were on a flat bench. Perform your target rep count on the steep incline. Then drop the bench angle to a slight incline, perform the next target rep range with no rest. Then drop the bench to horizontal and, without rest, do another set. You will find that as you move through the different planes, toward being more mechanically

advantaged, you can keep going when normally you would have hit failure at the steep incline. This is a great way to use biomechanics to overload and push a specific muscle beyond failure.



These are all great techniques. And they are just that – techniques....Tools.

There is no right or wrong.

There is no single perfect method.

The fact is – all of these tools should be used for different purposes and at different times throughout your training cycles.

Use every tool in your toolbox to get the job done most effectively. Don't be the person with only a hammer, so he treats everything as if it were a nail. You now have a whole toolbox in your arsenal – use each tool wisely to get the most muscle return for your time and energy investment.



CHAPTER 17: How Should You Structure Your Training Protocol?

This question is obviously dependent on your goals, but let's say your goal is more so bodybuilding – gaining size with some strength.

You will want to focus on a split that compliments your goals and physique. What that means is putting an emphasis on exercises and rep ranges that target lagging muscle groups that you wish to bring up, while the majority of your workout routine pivots around your core lifts, which will offer the systemic muscle growth you want.

Lets' break it down in really simple terms, and this is my own personal experience here too.

I've found that training the same muscles twice a week with different work loads works the best. So whether it is a 5 day split or generally speaking a 6 day split for myself – I will have 3 days of work that is geared around heavier weight plus lots of volume focusing on building some strength. Couple that with 3 days of higher reps, still lots of volume, and with shorter rest periods.

I find the hybrid of these two works amazingly well for overall gains.

If you aren't as fussed about sheer strength (which isn't mandatory for building size, but it is one of the forms of progressive overload I like to use), then focus on a 4-6 day body building split using separate muscle groups for each day. The most important thing is to start your workouts with your hardest compound lifts first. This way you are fresh with the more dangerous lifts, to avoid injury and to channel the brunt of your energy into systemic growth around the primary compound lifts. It is also a secret to increasing growth hormone at the start of your workout which will be beneficial when targeting those lagging muscle groups next.

Secondly, focus on lagging muscle groups more closely. Try different stimuli to see how they respond – the different stimuli being some of those advanced

suggestions I gave in the previous chapter, which sometimes require forcing those lagging groups through very challenging sets, with a combo of higher and low reps, heavy and lighter weight.

This is where a lot of people fall short, they want to bring up lagging parts, but they in no way train even close enough to the required tension or exertion to warrant growth.

Push yourself!

Thirdly, focus on your strengths or more genetically gifted body parts/exercises, last. It's not to say you always have to put them last – you can shuffle the order and in fact I recommend that, but don't make them a priority every week.

Here is an example of how different muscle groups with different muscle fiber types, respond to different workloads. I find for myself, personally, that my shoulders (deltoids) don't seem to respond as well to heavy weight/low volume, but they do respond well to high, HIGH volume and lots of drop sets. So I tend to focus on combining drop sets with some high rep sets for side-raises.

On the other hand, my back (lats especially) seems to grow with lower rep sets. If I tried to train my back the way I do my deltoids, it simply wouldn't respond the same way – and believe me, I've tried it. Likewise, my biceps seem to respond more to high volume and triceps to less volume but more weight.

And how do you know all this? By tracking plus trial and error! If you don't pay attention to what techniques you are using and what kind of measurable results are actually taking place, you'll never know these things about yourself.

So in part, you have to learn that manipulating your rep ranges and sets for each muscle is also key. Look at your physique and identify the lagging parts and the strengths, and begin tailoring your plan around where you are, but more so – where you want to BE.

Strength work should be in the area of 2-6 reps, while hypertrophy work from 6-12 reps and more high endurance resistance work being 12+ reps.



SUMMARY

1) Focus on a split that hits each muscle twice a week if possible and try to vary the rep count. So if you train chest on day 1, go a bit heavier – then when you train it again on say...day 5, go a little lighter, with more reps, more time under tension etc.

2) Realize that not all muscles respond to the same stimulus or rep count/volume. It takes time to figure this out, but for the most part to keep it simple, aim for 4-6 reps for strength work and 8-12 reps for hypertrophy work, or get a good mix of both.

3) Push yourself! Most people never take things outside their comfort zone and because of this they never grow or change, you have to get beyond your comfort zone to grow, it's as simple as that.

4) Prioritize your training to start with your hardest compound lifts FIRST. Then progress to lagging body parts. Then finish with small accessory muscles or your strengths last. Realize that you can change this up, so for 2 weeks focus on lagging groups then strengths, then every 3rd week focus on strengths first, and then lagging muscles last, just to maintain some balance.

5) If you want more guidance on this we have training programs and courses for training and nutrition at www.EvolvingAlpha.com to take the guess work out of all of this.

CHAPTER 18: Supplementation

Supplementation is one of those things that people tend to put too much emphasis on and in reality it makes up a very SMALL portion of your overall results if you do the rest right.

I think for a lot of people it is a way to attempt to bypass the process by mitigating the nutrition aspect.

It never works!

It is important to see supplementation as just that, “*supplementary*” to a great whole foods, plant-based diet and training protocol!

However, there is a place for certain supplementation when needed.

As a vegan, B12 can be an important supplement if it is lacking in your nutrition, but in this book I will be gearing my discussion towards bodybuilding supplements more than anything.

If you want to know more about vitamins and minerals on a vegan diet, refer back to *The Complete Idiots Guide To Plant Based Nutrition* by Julieanna Hever. That book will cover all of your needs.

Let's talk about supplements more geared towards muscle growth and bodybuilding. Do they work? How well do they work? Is it worth the money?

Let's find out.

Currently the only supplement I use aside from a plant based protein powder is BCAA's or Branched Chain Amino Acids on occasion. So I won't be going into huge depth about all the other supplements you see in the stores. Quite frankly, I suggest people spend more on good plant food and less on supplements, as I know MANY of them are just a pure waste of money. I would say over 90% of them are garbage and you definitely shouldn't be buying into all the hype around them.

I use BCAA's more so because I train in a fasted state, so to help act as a buffer from muscle breakdown when I am in a caloric deficit. Let me explain further.



1.) **BCAA's** are the building blocks of muscle tissue. Your body doesn't use the protein you eat to build muscle; it breaks the protein down into its further constituent parts -- amino acids. Then it uses those amino acids to build muscle. So in essence you are taking a supplement that is already one step ahead of raw protein in the synthesis production line. Therefore, it hits the bloodstream and shuttles to muscles very quickly, with minimal effort to convert it into usable parts.

BCAA's are a great tool if you train in a fasted state or are on a cut and are consuming a caloric deficit. As you lean out, if you do it too aggressively, you can lose muscle volume too – BCAA's can help buffer that loss.

I also find they act as an appetite suppressant, which helps with fasted training or periods of intermittent fasting.



2.) **Creatine Monohydrate** - While I haven't used this in years, it is one of the most heavily studied and researched supplements that ACTUALLY work. I will be real with you – MOST supplements are complete and utter garbage. They do very little for your 'gains' and, in the long run, probably harm them. Beyond that, just a total money drain that you could be using on your plant based food budget (that's where you want to invest it). Creatine, however, is relatively cheap and does work. It helps prolong your ATP response. In simple terms, this means your muscles can contract harder and longer than normal – which is a form of progressive overload, which if given the right nutrition along side it = muscle growth.

3.) **Plant Based Protein Powder**

Now, while I think this can really compliment a solid nutrition plan, I also think it's not 'essential' in building a great physique. Most people are overly obsessed with protein and feel if they don't go nuts on it for every meal they will waste away.

Simply not true.

However, the fundamental reason I use a plant based protein powder after my workout is because I don't eat right away and, to help curb hunger and begin shifting the body into repair mode, I want to shuttle some rapidly absorbed nutrients to the muscles, fast.

Let me explain further.

Like anything these are tools. They won't give you huge results if your training or nutrition isn't on point. What it can do though is help maximize your efforts.

Think of an Olympic 100m sprinter. He might change his shoes or cleats and gain a 0.01 second advantage. Now is that an amazing advantage if you are a beginner? No not really, but by the time you have dialed everything else in it could be the difference between 1st and 2nd place.

I suggest using a plant-based protein blend - one that is either: pea, hemp, quinoa or artichoke. I personally use a pea protein, as there is a lot of new exciting research coming out about this type of protein in relation to muscle building.

I personally use 20g (approximately one serving) post workout in water, right after my workout. This helps halt the catabolic effects we go through after a hard workout and begins to shuttle key nutrients to replenish our systems, shifting us into a more anabolic state. In saying this, do not depend on shakes to hit your macros.

If you use a protein powder, don't rely on it as a crutch, use it as a tool. I see a lot of novice vegan bodybuilders or non-vegans for that matter -- pounding back shakes to hit a specific macro count. Let me tell you that if your macros are that awkward and skewed that you cannot achieve them with

good, whole foods, you are doing something massively wrong, and you need to overhaul how you eat until you aren't dependent on them. In that case, it's time to go back to chapter one and start reading again. The majority of your daily protein requirements should and WILL come from whole foods.



CHAPTER 19: FAQ's

Q) What about water manipulation to appear leaner? Should I do it?

A) I personally suggest you avoid this, as you just don't know how your body will react to lack of water, you might find you actually hold MORE water, because of it. If you've dieted down correctly and drink enough water daily, you should be so dialed in you won't need to manipulate water. Possibly only the morning of your show or photo shoot, should you restrict your water just so you can stay dry and more defined.

Q) What about “mock meats”? Can I use them instead of animal flesh – are they healthy?

A) It's always going to be context related. If you are transitioning from a non-vegan diet they are a great tool, to help bridge the gap. In my opinion is it healthier than eating animals – yes. Is it healthier than whole plant foods – No.

So there is a context here, I've seen people achieve amazing results using mock meats. Is it necessary to use them to achieve results, not at all – can they help some people. Of course.

Q) Can I use soy? I heard it raises Estrogen and affects muscle gains and fat loss?

A) For the most part this has been blown way out of proportion. Most research indicates that good non-gmo, organic, wholefood soy sources are fine for us.

Soy contains phytoestrogens, which interact differently than mammalian estrogens do. Most people do fine with phytoestrogens unless you have an allergy response or severe pre-existing hormonal dysfunction. Our body produces mammalian estrogen which non-vegans actually get large doses of through dairy and meat, and *that does* impact sex hormone levels in some people.

It is more highly processed soy that we should be aware of, but it's always good to moderate any processed foods – whether it is soy or not.

In summary, clean soy sources are fine for the average person to consume in reasonable portions and will not elevate sex hormone levels. Like anything, if you eat one kind of food in massive excess daily you will see side effects – the key is to be balanced with your dietary approach.

Q) Will the extra carbs in my diet make me gain fat?

A) Not at all, that is one of the biggest fallacies I see out there. Carbs don't make you fat, TOO MUCH FOOD (of any macronutrient) makes you fat, period. If you dial your caloric intake in the right way and your nutrient timing you can consume high amounts of carbs in your diet and still get very lean. Currently my diet is 60+% carbohydrate and I can easily get to single digit body fat numbers. You can too if you dial the diet in and time the foods right.

Q) I keep getting bloating and gas - What is going on?

A) It could be one of a few things. First off, try cutting back on some of the fiber you consume. If you have recently bumped your fiber content up a lot the digestive system can take a strain to process it all, causing a bit of a back log, so try cutting that back.

Secondly, you could be experiencing a mild allergic reaction or intolerance to a specific food you are eating. Try an elimination diet, where each week you remove one thing and replace it with something else. For example beans – some people do fine with beans, other people bloat with them, so you may need to change your beans for quinoa or lentils etc. You can also be more sensitive to some beans than others.

Lastly you may need to work on your gut health, which I cover in the gut health chapter of this book,

or get an intolerance test done to see what foods you are reacting too.

Q) Will the fat in my diet make me gain fat?

A) Again, total nonsense when people suggest the “fat you eat is the fat you wear”. No the excess calories you eat is the fat you wear. An addition of healthy whole plant food fats, such as nuts, seeds, avocado etc. are fine, as long as you have a grasp on your calorie intake that fat will NOT make you fat.

Q) How do I know if I'm eating enough?

A) Based on all the biofeedback cues I give in this book around sleep, energy levels, focus, strength, endurance, weight/measurement changes, cravings – those cues collectively will tell you if you are eating enough nutrient dense food.

Q) Can I gain muscle with less protein like you suggest?

A) Yes. Common thinking is really protein over-kill. I suggest you order and read Dr. Garth Davis' book "Proteinaholic" for more scientific data and research on this topic. The concept of 1g/1lbs of body weight or 1g/2.2kg really is so high, the body just excretes additional protein. Studies indicate there is no difference to consuming 0.64g-0.82g/kg of body weight which has shown to build and maintain muscle just as well as the higher amounts. As long as you hit this requirement and eat enough total calories you will build muscle

Q) Why don't I see more successful Vegan Bodybuilders out there if this is so great?

A) It's simply because the pool of vegan bodybuilders to choose from is FAR smaller than meat eaters and they aren't as well known because mainstream

supplement companies don't endorse them (as they don't sell vegan products).

A lot of vegan body builders are also doing this for improved health, so taking high doses of anabolic steroids, insulin, and HGH, is far less common than in non-vegan circles, generally speaking. There are a lot of amazing vegan bodybuilders coming out of the wood work now, it's just a matter of seeking them out.

Q) Why do you feel you are an authority to write a book on Vegan Nutrition?

A) Because I invest my passion, life, and energy into this beautiful lifestyle of Veganism and if I don't sit down and write this, who will? I love this lifestyle. The vegan way of life, changed my own life in so many ways! And if I can help other people flourish doing this, that is the single most important reason for writing this book.

Q) If I'm cutting fat what should the MAIN staple foods in my diet be, to keep things simple?

A) It can be the same as a bulking diet, just remove some of the more calorically dense foods and replace some of it with green vegetables. You can still eat some of those more calorically dense foods, just tweak the portions adding in more green vegetables to help keep you full and satisfied. You do not have to convert over to mock meats and tofu with salads to cut body fat.

Q) What if I struggle to eat enough calories in order to build muscle? (I'm always full)

A) Either you just don't want it bad enough, or drink calorie dense smoothies. Liquid calories always help bump the intake up to the target.

Q) Does all this information apply to men and women or just men?

A) This book can apply to men and women, vegan and soon-to-be vegans!

Q) What about all the vitamins and minerals I might not get on this diet? Could that hinder my results?

A) It's complete nonsense. You can get all the vitamins and minerals you need to be healthy and build a good physique as a vegan. It's just lack of knowledge on what to eat that is often the barrier. Overcome that and the rest is easy! People who say they didn't feel good doing this, simply did not research or learn enough to make it work optimally for them.

Q) Will I get enough vitamins and minerals on a vegan diet to be healthy, build muscle and get strong?

A) Yes. In fact, if done right you will get more vitamins and minerals from a good vegan diet than any other diet out there and that will transfer over to better hormonal balance and more strength and muscle growth.

Q) How do I know what macros are best for cutting or bulking? I'm so confused about the macros I should be eating!

A) You are over thinking and over complicating the process right from the get-go. Clear your mind-clutter and start with what I suggested in the early chapters about first finding your total calorie intake, then testing short periods of more fat and less carbs and vice versa. There will be a little bit of trial and error, but again – if you want it badly enough you will

go through the trial process to find your metabolic sweet spot and not give up in the first week because you feel you 'failed'. Failure is a teacher. Remember that. It's a stepping stone towards the goal.

Q) What are the best macros for an ectomorph, endomorph, or mesomorph - aka hard gainer, medium build, or someone who is genetically bigger?

A) Again don't overcomplicate stuff. It's not as much about the macros to begin with as it is TOTAL calories. People obsess over the minutia early on and it's not worth it. If you follow your biofeedback cues properly and go through the testing period, you will begin to see if you run better on high fat or high carb. It will be different for each person. The general rule of thumb is that people who are genetically thin will be able to eat more total calories and process them faster without fat gain than someone who tends to be genetically more prone to storing fat.

Q) Is fasted cardio or cardio in general a good thing to add in for fat loss?

A) It's not pivotal for fat loss. Cardio as part of a good training plan can be a good addition for overall endurance, but it's not essential for fat loss either.

Q) What is the difference between a clean bulk and a dirty bulk?

A) Bulk is another word for being in a calorie surplus and putting on more weight. A 'clean bulk' is when you stick with good, wholesome, plant foods and add weight. A 'Dirty bulk' is when you add in more junk food and processed stuff to get your calorie intake high enough. I strongly advise against this way of eating as it skews hormonal balances and neurotransmitter production to a really sub-optimal level.

Q) I get overwhelmed with what I should make for each meal, I don't have much time and I just never know what to eat? Help!

A) Keep it simple. You don't have to make flamboyant recipes. Combine different food types into one plate, like a serving of rice, beans, peas, and chopped zucchini. Season it or add a sauce and you have a well balanced meal, that in its constituent parts is simple to prepare and cook.

Also, when you find meals that work for you, make routines out of them. You still need to be sure you get a variety of foods throughout the day, but if you know that meal 1 every day is going to be a smoothie with greens and fruit, then it's less stress and less decision making for you. And *that* will keep you on track for the long term!

We also have our [Evolving Alpha Nutrition & Recipes](#) site, which is an online library of all the delicious recipes we use, updated weekly with new recipes!

Next Step – Pimp Your Plan

Ok, where do you go from here? What's your first step to applying all this new knowledge?

Well, if you found this ebook helpful then you will really benefit from the online interactive course created as a companion to this book - "Pimp Your Plan"!

It is a online program that walks you through the process of customizing your own unique plant based nutrition + training plan using the principles outlined in the chapters of this book.

This way you don't just stop at reading and learning... you have to put it into ACTION! We need to take the theory of all the decision making around optimal performance, fat loss & muscle growth with an awesome plant based diet -- and literally apply it

to the multiple training and nutrition templates I've created, coupled with a video course which I teach, that guides you through all of this step-by-step - the system is totally laid out for you. All you have to do is plug and chug!

By the end of it you will have your very own vegan nutrition and training system. And we've made it extremely affordable for everyone - much lower than the cost of most decent custom plans.

How about that? For only 49USD\$.

My goal is to help as many people Evolve this coming year, which means becoming a great walking billboard for this amazing lifestyle -- so join me and let's make it happen.

Resource Section – Evolving Alpha

- Our New Evolving Alpha Website:
www.EvolvingAlpha.com
- Our Former PlantStrongFitness Website:
www.PlantStrongFitness.com

We have plenty of resources available on our website including done-for-you Meal Plans & Training Plans for under \$50!

We also have 8 week and 12 week programs for both fat loss and muscle building as well as custom designed programs, skype coaching calls, and more!

Training And Nutrition Programs

Plant Strong Fitness Training cycles And Customized Nutrition for Max muscle growth, Max fat loss and Max body change - brought to you by Fraser Bayley



AND MORE...!

Want To Lose Fat?

Fat Apocalypse or Vegainz Cutting Protocol

Fat Apocalypse



FAT APOCALYPSE
FAT'S BIGGEST FEAR

TRANSFORM YOUR BODY INTO A
"FAT-BURNING MACHINE"
& START SEEING RESULTS IN THE
FIRST 7 DAYS!

✓ Flatten Your Stomach
✓ Curb Your Cravings
✓ Burn Fat & Increase Your Energy

GET STARTED NOW

[Click here to get instant access to Fat Apocalypse.](#)

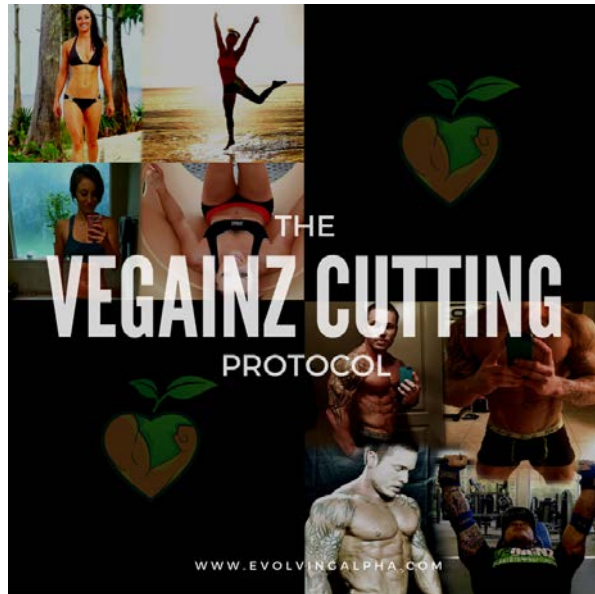
Fat Apocalypse is like “The Biggest Loser” for vegans. This program is definitely a challenge but it gets awesome results. Menus are provided for each week as well as training programs. If you can work hard and just want to follow a plan without thinking, this one is for you. If you need more flexibility, check out the Vegainz Cutting Protocol on the next page.

**Both programs are 8 weeks long and include access to our private coaching group where we can assist you through your journey!*

Want To Lose Fat?

Fat Apocalypse or Vegainz Cutting Protocol

Vegainz Cutting Protocol



This program is geared towards optimal fat loss, while still holding all the muscle you have - and NOT feeling deprived or losing your marbles trying to diet down to get lean.

You Get:

- 8 weeks of nutrition plans and cycles (two different plans so you can figure out which one works best for you)
- 8 weeks of training (again two different plans so you have options)
- Myself (Fraser & Lauren) as coaches in our private coaching group to help guide you through the process
- I can assure you if this is the step by step plan I always use - it's because it works! so take that as a reason to get on board.

Here is a special discount video screen capture explaining the program and you get (US100.00 off the normal price going through this gift link)

HERE <http://bit.ly/vegainzfatloss>

Want To Build Muscle?

Vegainz 12 Week Muscle Builder

Vegainz



I created this program to give the most explosive, rapid, mind-boggling results possible when it comes to packing on muscle on a vegan diet.

It uses my own advanced techniques, detailing training plans, menu boards, and nutrient timing to create the perfect storm for muscle building!

If you are up for a challenge and want to break the status quo around vegan muscle then join me for this 12 week experience where I will coach you in a private group setting online through the entire process

Want To Get In Shape And Stay Healthy For Good?

Are You Committed To Your Fitness Success Long-Term?

Then Our Coach's Club Is For YOU!

Coach's Club Membership



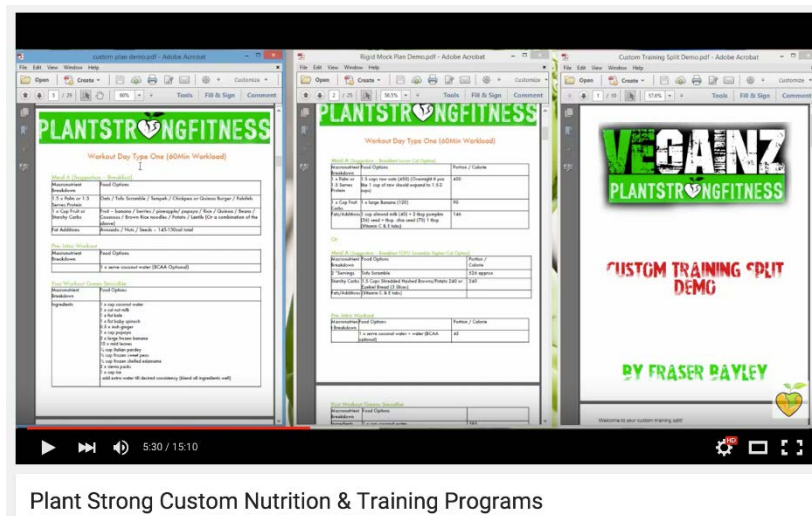
The Coach's Club gives you full VIP access to everything Evolving Alpha. You get first access to all the new programs we create, plus all of our recipes (updated weekly), more than 12 weeks of meal plans and training plans for fitness maintenance, mix-and-matchable workouts, mindset resources, and more!

Plus you get access to our private coaching group where we can help you through your journey and answer your questions directly! Email us to join!

Need A Custom Plan Designed Just For You?

Do you need a detailed awesome Evolving Alpha custom plant based nutrition plan + or training? Something built from top to bottom specifically for you?

Order Custom Nutrition & Training Plans



[Here is a screen capture video](#) explaining and showing you what I do to customize your plan and make it perfect for you taking into account:

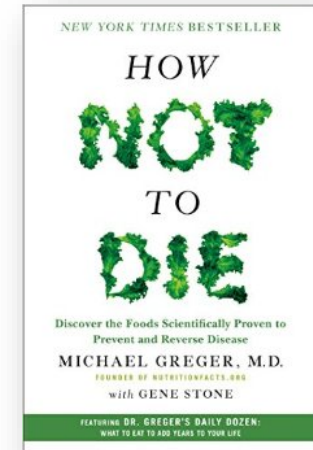
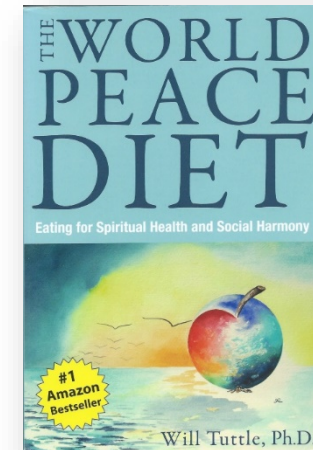
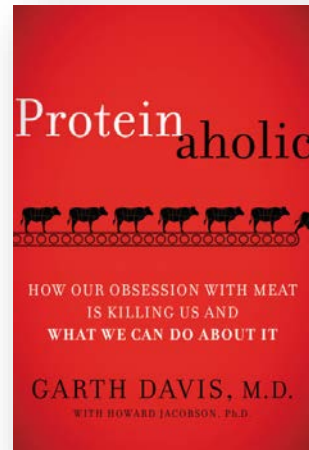
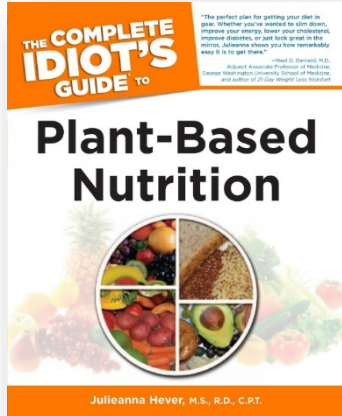
- Your goals
- Body composition and body type
- Experience with plant based diets or workouts
- Your lifestyle, meal timing
- Hormonal challenges or other issues we can work with
- Recipes and foods you like and don't like
- All geared towards your specific goal

I make it easy to follow and give you ways to tweak the plan (portions of certain foods) as you progress so you don't have to keep buying new plans - this one works as you advance too

I love doing this stuff and if you need one get on it - they are totally custom, plant based plans geared to YOUR needs and goals.

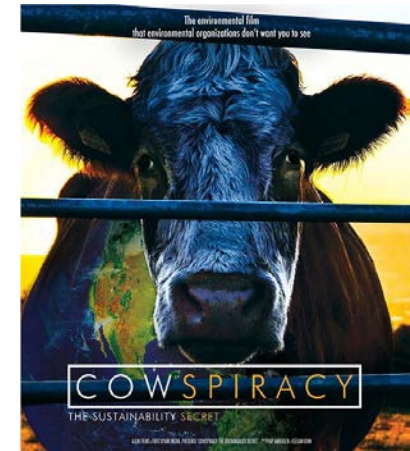
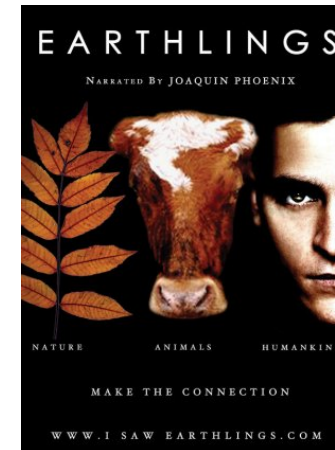
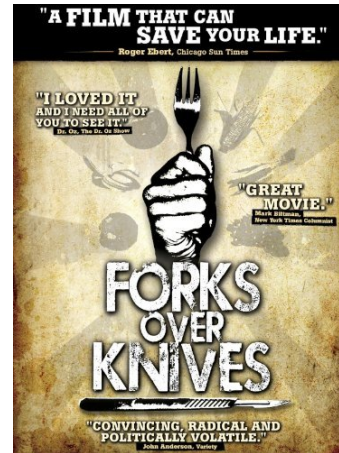
Resource Section – Other Great Books...

- Juliana Hever – *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Plant Based Nutrition*
- Dr. Garth Davis – *Proteinaholic*
- Robert Cheeke – *Shred It*
- Will Tuttle, PhD – *The World Peace Diet*
- Michael Greger, M.D. – *How Not To Die*



Resource Section – Documentaries/Videos...

- Forks Over Knives
- Earthlings
- Cowspiracy
- [101 Reasons to go vegan](#)
- Gary Yourofsky's [Most Important Speech You Will Ever Hear](#) and [A Life Changing Speech](#)



Resource Section – Other Helpful Websites...

- www.VeganKit.com
- www.NutritionFacts.org
- www.CalorieKing.com
- www.OneGreenPlanet.org