



RECIPE FOR A FLAT STOMACH

Everyone wants to lose weight. In many cases, that's a mistake. Weight is only one factor — lean muscle mass, body fat percentage, hip to waist ratio, etc. are all just as important.

Here is the three steps to a flat stomach:

1. **Cardio, cardio, cardio.**

Doing all the abs exercises in the world will do nothing if you have a layer of fat covering it. Doing strength training, or lifting weights, would help, but not as much as aerobic exercise. So my plan is to continue my running, and add in swimming and biking. I plan to do at least 30 minutes of cardio 6 days a week. On some days I'll do more — 45 minutes, an hour, two hours, even more on long days. I'll start out short for the bike and swim, like I did with running, until I build up my endurance. A quick note: interval training is also great, and I will add that in after my endurance is better. If you want to add some ab exercises in after the cardio, that's great, but be sure to work your whole torso, not just the upper abs — that includes the lower abs, lower back and the muscles that wrap around your sides.

2. **Less Fat and Sugar.**

It's that simple. The American diet is typically filled with fat and sugar, and you'll never get a flat stomach on that recipe. Cut out meat, if you can, and even better, cut out dairy and eggs. But if you can't, at least eat lean meats (low-fat turkey, skinless chicken breast, lean beef, fish), and stay away from fried food and too many sugary desserts. That doesn't mean you have to starve yourself — if you're eating healthy, you can actually eat a lot — or deprive yourself too much, but only eat the bad stuff in moderation. Vegan diet is the best, especially if it's balanced, rich in vegetable protein and calcium and minerals, full of fresh fruits and veggies, and high in fiber.

3. **Give it Time.**

If you want to have a flat stomach in 3 weeks, or two months, forget it. Losing fat takes time, and it's unhealthy to lose too much weight too fast. Aim for 1-2 lbs. a week. Gradual weight loss is healthier, and more likely to be sustained over time. Go for a lifestyle change, something you can live with for the rest of your life, or you will just yo-yo. It's a marathon, not a sprint.