

An absolute beginners guide to losing weight.

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It's the new year and we have loads of people coming to the gym for the first time wanting to "lose weight".

There are 3 places where we lose fat. In order of priority, these are:

1. In your head
2. In your kitchen
3. In the gym

In your head

First we need to learn and *accept* that:

*"our bodyweight is the result of months/years of our **behaviour and habits**. To change our weight we need to **change these behaviours and habits**."*

This will almost certainly mean:

- Eating foods that we rarely/never have.
- Cutting out foods we have nearly every day.
- Doing physical activity that we usually avoid.

We can make this easy or hard for ourselves.

To make it *hard* for ourselves:

- Reject and fight against the idea that we need to change our behaviour and habits.
- Have a negative attitude towards the subject (or be a "glass half empty" kind of person).
- Think of losing fat as a "chore" to be endured and fought against.
- Look for "loopholes" in the fat loss programme that allows you to fall back into old behaviours/habits.

To make it *easy* on ourselves:

- Accept and rejoice in the idea that we are going to change our behaviour and habits.
- Have a positive attitude to the subject (or be a "glass half full" kind of person).
- Think of losing fat as some kind of exciting journey full of fun and adventure (sounds corny I know...but it works, I promise).
- Look for interesting and unique ways to add to the fat loss programme (we usually enjoy and believe more in our own plans than those from other people).

The final bit of head doctor advice is:

“Don’t Panic!”

Remember, losing fat is like a long and very winding road. Your head has to accept that sometimes you might be heading in the completely wrong direction. But don’t worry, because ultimately you will reach your destination.



Sometimes you have to go in the wrong direction to reach your destination.

In your kitchen

What you do and don’t eat will have the *greatest direct impact on your fat loss by far!* So this is where we must put most effort into changing bad behaviours and habits.

First of all, read, re-read, then re-read *again* the [10 simple rules to healthy eating](#). We are going to change our habits and behaviours by *actually following* these, 1 rule at a time (don’t panic and think we have to change everything all at once).

9 out of 10 people will read these rules and say:

“but I eat healthily anyway!”

I’m sorry, but if we are carrying a lot of excess fat...we are *not* eating healthily. What usually happens is that we remember that we ate half a carrot last week, but forgot that we had a takeaway every other day.

Remember what I said at the start of this article?

*“our bodyweight is the result of months/years of our **behaviour and habits**. To change our weight we need to **change these behaviours and habits**.”*

Now choose 1 rule. Any rule you like. But follow it *to the letter* for 1 week. Follow the rule 100% with *absolutely no* deviations whatsoever. *Never* break the rule for 1...week.

This is a simple but effective way of getting into a new, *good*, habit.

After this initial week, follow the rule for 5-6 days out of 7. Once we have a habit established we can take it a bit easier on ourselves. We tend to follow the rule “out of habit”, and it really doesn’t matter if we break a rule once in a blue moon. It’s not the end of the world.

Now we do the same for the other 9 rules. 1 rule per week, until 10 weeks later we have a whole new set of good behaviours and habits and the bodyfat will be dropping off!

In the gym

To be honest, when I say “in the gym” what I really mean is “any and all physical activity”. And again, we need to change our habits and behaviour when it comes to physical activity.

Western civilisation is based on 1 thing...making things easier and more convenient. Here are a few of examples:

- Cars (make travel easier)
- iPods (make listening to music more convenient)
- Supermarkets/department stores (make shopping more convenient)
- Home shopping channels (so easy to shop you don’t even have to leave your home)
- Ready meals (easy and convenient way to prepare food)
- Sliced bread (so easy we don’t even have to pick up a bread knife! 😊)

We have all grown into the habit of thinking/saying:

“I’ll take the easy option every time”.

But if we *always* take the easy option, we just get fat and lazy.

When it comes to fat burning, we need to change that bad habit and get into the good one of:

“I’ll avoid the easy option every time”.

So in the gym, this means we should try to make our workouts:

- More frequent (do them more times per week)

- Harder/faster/heavier (gradually shift the levels/speeds/weights up)
- Last longer (add a couple of minutes per workout/week)

A good fat burning workout is one that includes a good mixture of *both* cardiovascular exercise (stuff that gets you out of breath) and resistance exercise (shifting heavy weights around).

And don't worry about "getting bulky". If you are losing weight, you will be losing muscle also.

And because I get asked this every week, there is no exercise that will burn the fat from your belly/bum/thighs/bingo wings etc.

Take a look at my article about [losing weight](#), and pay extra special attention to the bit that says you cannot target fat loss.

The best analogy I have heard about how we all lose body fat is:

"Fat loss is like draining the water out of a swimming pool. It doesn't matter where the plughole is, some parts of the pool (the shallow end) will always drain first. But keep going and eventually every part of the pool will be drained".

And that is like our bodies. It does not matter what exercises you do targeting what muscles in what order and with what sets/reps/weights. Your genetics determine what part of your body loses fat first and there is **NOTHING** we can do to change it.

So just keep at it, enjoy the ride and your body will eventually burn fat from your problem spot.

And finally...

Some common excuses I have heard and even made myself include:

- *But I don't like that food* – when was the last time you actually tried that food? There is a good chance it was probably years ago and you just had a bad experience from it and now you just *expect* to not like it. Why not try it again but with an open, positive attitude. I used to *hate* mushrooms. I had never actually tasted one, but I just didn't like the idea of eating a mold...now I can't get enough of them!
- *But I can't live without my (insert any item of junk food here)* - this is just plain silly. I used to say things like that about chocolate until I realised I sounded like a spoilt child throwing a tantrum. Since then I have tried to act a little bit more grown up. Sorry this sounds harsh, but it is true.
- *I hate exercise* - the vast majority of people who say this have had a bad experience of exercise in their past. Maybe you, like me, had a complete *idiot* for a PE teacher in school? If this is the case, please give it another try. Or read [my strange post comparing exercise to shoes](#). Trust me, there are a million kinds of exercise out there. There *is* a kind you will like. Don't let one bad experience ruin your life.