



YOUR NUTRITION GAME PLAN

Lose the Fat, Keep the Muscle

So you want to lose body fat and keep or gain muscle. Here's what you need to do: burn more calories than you take in, eat enough protein and lift weights.

Lose the Fat

The first secret to losing body fat is simple...burn more calories than you take in. Body fat is your holding tank for energy. In fact, each pound of it holds 3,500 calories. Body fat accumulates when you eat more calories than your body burns, and is withdrawn when you eat fewer calories than your body burns.

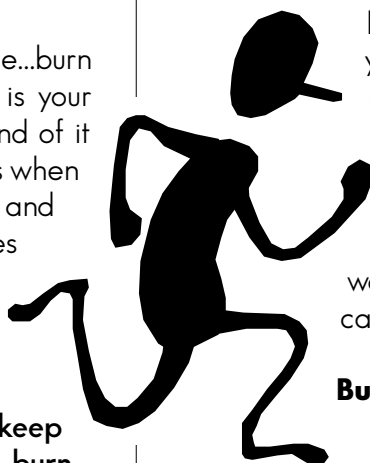
But hold back on your desire to really cut back on calories to lose the fat quickly. A crash diet guarantees you'll lose muscle.

The best way to drop fat while you keep the muscle is to take in fewer calories, burn more calories, or both.

Take in Fewer Calories

- Have a daily plan for eating. Going longer than 4-5 hours without eating can lead to overeating later on, so plan on eating at least four times per day. Figure out where and when you will eat. If you'll be eating on the go, pack the food and drinks that you'll need. Don't leave your eating to chance.
- Cut down on portion size of foods and drinks. Take just a little bit less or leave 1/4 to 1/2 of the helping on your plate/in the glass. Using smaller glasses, cups, bowls and plates can help you reduce portion size.
- If you drink regular soft drinks, choose soft drinks that have no calories instead.

- Start meals with fresh fruits, raw vegetables, tossed salad (go easy on the dressing) or broth-based soups. These foods can help fill you up without giving you a lot of calories.



If these tips are not working for you, you may need to visit with a nutritionist or dietitian. She/he may ask you to write down what and how much you eat and drink for a few days. Recording what you eat and drink is sometimes the best way to figure out how to decrease your calorie intake.

Burn More Calories

Some athletes have maxed out on training, so they can't reasonably burn more calories through physical activity without overtraining or hurting their performance.

But some athletes can. An hour in practice is different than constantly moving large leg muscles for two hours. For example, during a football game, the most active players are moving at full speed for only about 10 minutes. Walking to the huddle, waiting in line for a drill, shagging balls, spotting, listening to instruction, etc. do not burn many calories.

You'll burn far more with cardiovascular workouts like running, cycling, rowing, stair climbing, spinning and other exercises where you move your legs rhythmically and constantly.

Moving more in everyday activities is also important. Do you sit a lot? Take the car instead of walk? Veg out in front of the TV? Take elevators

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and escalators instead of stairs? Adding more activity to your daily routine can burn up calories, and you'll hardly notice doing it.

Keep the Muscle

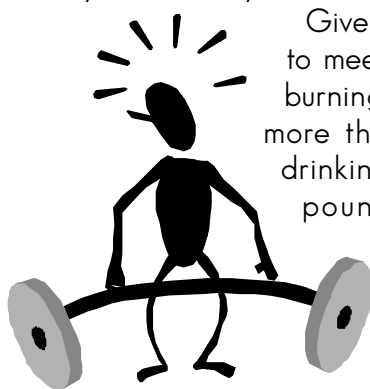
The next secret to keeping or building muscle while you lose fat is to eat enough protein so your body doesn't draw from its own muscle tissue.

A daily level of 1.5 grams of protein per kg body weight, or .68 gm per pound is enough if at least 2/3 of your protein is from animal sources like meat, poultry, fish, milk, cheese, yogurt or eggs. If you get most of your protein from breads, cereals, beans, nuts and peanut butter, you'll need even more – go for 2.0 grams per kg.

The third secret to losing fat and keeping (or increasing) muscle is to stick to a proper, supervised resistance-training program. If you don't stimulate your muscles by lifting progressively heavier weights, they won't grow. You might have access to a supervised weight-training program through your school. Or you may have to seek the advice of a strength and conditioning expert at a local health club or gym.

When Can I Start?

Because most athletes don't have the time or energy to focus on dietary changes and extra training during the season, the best time to lose body fat is usually off-season or between seasons.



Give yourself plenty of time to meet your goal. If you are burning 500 calories a day more than you're eating and drinking, you'll lose about 1 pound per week. Larger athletes, with more body fat to lose, can shoot for faster rates, say, 2-3 pounds per week. But pushing for

faster weight loss can all but guarantee muscle loss.

One way to know whether you're losing fat and keeping muscle is to have your body fat measured. But, you can also tell by the way your clothes fit and the way you look and feel.

SHOULD I FOLLOW A CERTAIN DIET?

There are as many "good diets" as there are athletes. You might choose to follow a structured diet plan or just fine-tune what you eat now.

The best diet for you is one you can follow and that gives your body the nutrients it needs. It's critical to maintain a balanced diet that has enough calories, protein and other nutrients to support training, aid recovery, and help you resist illness and injury.

Athletes who consume less than 1,800 calories per day have more difficulty getting the needed nutrients to support health and training and should consider taking a multivitamin-mineral supplement.

