**The Weight Loss Equation**

If your foremost nutritional goal is to attain and maintain a lean, health body mass, the simplest equation that I can offer from my study and experience is:

**[Fat + Carbohydrates] - [Fiber + Protein + Activity Level] = Net Weight Gain/Loss**

This can also be written using the compatible 'net carbohydrates' concept of subtracting fiber from carbohydrates:

**[Fat + Net Carbohydrates] - [Protein + Activity Level] = Net Weight Gain/Loss**

If you're aiming for net weight loss, you want the second bracket to have more than the first bracket, creating a negative value (weight loss) through the equation. If you're using the second form of the equation, the ideal is to have the first bracket produce a negative value itself; all vegetables, especially raw and unprocessed, will produce such a negative value in the first bracket.

An example:

*Outer Aisle Gourmet Cauliflower Sandwich Thins* have 2.5 g total fat, 2 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber and 4 g protein per serving. [2.5 + 2] - [1 + 4] = **-0.5**

A negative value like this is what we're looking for; it’s indicative of weight loss, so that even before including activity level in the equation your weight loss goals are being encouraged. Of course, this is *before* including anything else in or on these sandwich thins, so the picture is incomplete. The sauces and meats packed between the thins are likely to be high in fats and sugars, depending upon how careful you are with your selections.

Now, I'm *not* advocating for counting all the grams of each type of macronutrient (protein, carbohydrates, fat and fiber) that you consume, unless you want to in the interests of undertaking a very systematic observational analysis enhancing your understanding of your dietary habits. What I *am* advocating is that, if you struggle with reaching and maintaining a healthy body mass as many, even most, Americans do, that you simply be aware of the aforementioned equations (pick the version that you’re most comfortable with) and be able to quickly make their calculations from the nutrition facts on the package in the grocery store. This will empower you with the ability to understand the relative body mass impact of the foods you’re considering taking home from the grocery store, thereby facilitating your weight loss and maintenance goals. In relation to this, I would ask you to consider the possibility that, in relation to its health impact (i.e. state of existence and quality of life impact), healthy, conscientious grocery shopping is one of the most important *skills* that anyone can develop in the course of their lives.

Alas, if you find it too tedious to perform the previously expressed calculations (which, like anything, becomes easier to complete with practice), simply keep the following in mind:

**Fiber, Protein and Physical Activity are weight loss and healthy weight management allies, while Fat, Carbohydrates and an Inactive Lifestyle are the enemies, slowing or outright preventing weight loss.**

Why? This is primarily about satiety and the thermic effect of feeding relative to calories and metabolic impact. Carbohydrates are the macronutrient most directly correlated with blood sugar which, when not burned by the body and brain, is stored as body fat – which is why low carb diets are the go-to type of diet for facilitating weight loss. And fat is the most calorically dense macronutrient by far. Thus, when you have high amounts of both carbohydrates and fat in your diet you are encouraging the production of body fat, unless, of course, you’re highly active and require the extra calories. On the other side of the equation fiber and protein fill you up, keep you fuller far longer, are less calorically dense and also require one's body to work harder (expend more energy/calories) to digest and make use of them, creating a smaller net caloric gain relative to the calories consumed.

With a weight loss goal, you must force your body to burn its energy reserves, the vast majority of which will be body fat (depending upon your body composition), especially if you’re overweight. This is accomplished by depriving it of its typical external energy sources while, ideally, also expending extra energy through physical activity. The body is thereby forced to meet its energy needs *internally*, which is the purpose of body fat: it was evolved as a caloric savings to tap into when there’s no caloric income, so to speak. And as you approach the ideal weight you can begin adding back more fats and carbohydrates to flatten out the weight loss curve towards sustainable long term maintenance.

Thus, I find this to be the simplest way to conceive of an effective weight loss strategy. But even this requires knowledge and discipline to effectively apply.

One such form of knowledge: many (if not most) foods consist of at least two, if not all four, of these macronutrients (fiber, protein, fat and carbohydrates), and it's up to you to be able to determine the relative extent to which they comprise the food. Therefore, knowing the general composition of common foods is useful, as you won’t always have the nutritional facts available. And you can generally be assured that prepared foods tilt the equation against weight loss, even when the ‘type’ of food is similar. This is, of course, why it’s generally far better for weight loss efforts to control everything that goes into your food and, thus, to prepare it yourself.

In other words, and with an example: a six ounce serving of lean (low fat) chicken breast cooked in minimal oil and flavored with things like spices and vinegar accompanied by veggies, ideally raw (thereby requiring more energy to break down by the body and also being far more nutrient dense than when cooked) is*far different* from a six ounce serving of orange chicken from*Panda Express*, especially if you ordered the noodles and/or rice as accompaniments.

Baked chicken flavored with vinegar and spices:

(5 + 0) – (0 + 50) = - 45

*Panda Express* Orange Chicken:

(18 + 44) – (0 + 13) = 49

What you find in this example, and in most popular, processed, fast-served ‘meats’ compared to healthy-flavored home-prepared meats in general, is that a considerable portion of the restaurant’s so-called meat is actually breading, and then this more-bread-than-meat chicken is slathered in oil and sugar (i.e. in fats and carbohydrates). In this case, you can clearly see that comparing chicken to chicken yields opposite results in the equation. And this is without the consideration of the quality of the oil and the impact of heavily processed, even hydrogenated, oils on human health, for, again, this is a weight loss equation, not a total health equation.

This example also illustrates how valuable it is to learn to flavor food*without* sugars and oils, as you want to be able to enjoy the food, which anyone can do by throwing fat and sugar (in any form) at it, but which far fewer can do with spices, vinegars, coco aminos etc. You will be richly rewarded by learning and conditioning your way to be amongst the minority in the latter camp.

Don't get me wrong,*Panda Express* is a guilty pleasure of mine! Just be aware that the liberally-applied fry oil, fatty, low-quality meat and carbohydrate-dense breading and sweet flavoring is loaded with the fat and carbohydrates that count against you in this quest; and that's*before* other health considerations, like its near complete lack of micronutrients (making it full of ‘empty calories’) and disease-inviting elements, which leads me to...

A disclaimer: I am not saying that this is all there is to nutrition and becoming your healthiest self. Nutrition is immensely complicated and involves many variables that the 'experts' disagree on all the time. What is clear is that moderate fat intake is good for you when it’s in the right, natural forms the human body evolved to put to advantageous use, which includes all plant-based fats (think olive oil, avocados, nuts and coconut oil) and omega 3 fatty acids sourced from aquatic plants which fish consume and pass on through their consumption. Ditch all fry oils, anything not cold-pressed, anything industrially processed and especially anything denatured to the point of becoming a 'trans fat,' which may be the most unhealthy thing a person can consume.

Personally, I’m a proponent of consuming an abundance of vegetables, fruits and seafood, as much of it raw as possible and none of it fried or cooked at extremely high heat levels (as this creates carcinogenic byproducts and destroys nutrients), and utilizing, again, spices, light amounts of cold-pressed olive or avocado oil and vinegars for flavor. This yields a result that is both excellent for weight loss and management *as well as being* excellent in terms of micronutrient density and overall health impact.

Please see the page/paper “The Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo Diet” for more on the most critical components and connected principles pursuant to superior health. If you can find the strength to combine the knowledge contained within that paper/presentation and this one with the discipline to habitually enact said knowledge, you’ll have set yourself on the road towards your leanest, most vital and most disease-resistant self.