WEIGHT LOSS RELAXED

Low Carb Diet Without Dieting or Exercise.
How to Lose Weight the Healthy Way and Keep It Off.
Revolutionize Your Diet, Transform Your Life.

Björn Rudnik

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Disclaimer

Dear reader,

Before you enthusiastically embark on the journey of losing weight without exercise, I would like to give you a few important pointers:

1. I am not a doctor or nutritionist: I am just someone who has managed to lose 66 pounds and would like to share my experiences with you. What worked for me may not necessarily work for everyone else. Every body is different!
2. Health complaints? Better ask an expert! If you have specific health issues or concerns, please talk to a doctor or qualified nutritionist before making any changes to your diet. Safety first!
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Now that we have this important topic out of the way, you are well informed – so let's start together and head towards a healthier life!

Sincerely

Björn Rudnik

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Introduction

Hello and welcome to *Weight Loss Relaxed!* I would like to thank you very much for placing your trust in me and purchasing this book. If you don't just read it and put it aside afterwards, but actually apply the method described here, then this book could be the best investment you ever make.

In any case, you have already recognized that you want to change something about your health situation, or more precisely, your weight situation. You have already taken the most important step. Investing in yourself, especially in your own health, always pays off in many ways. With a functioning weight loss method, such as the one described in this book, you are also investing in your appearance and your well-being. And that will bring further positive effects with it – I can promise you that.

First, let's briefly clarify what you can expect from this book. This is not meant to be a long and all-encompassing reference book on the subject of losing weight and getting slim. Weight Loss Relaxed is a practical, quick-to-read book that encourages you to try it out. In it, I describe my true story and the method behind it, how I finally lost a proud 30 kg (66 lbs) without exercise in a healthy and sustainable way after several failed attempts.

I don't want to overload you with too much theory from the field of nutritional science. Which, by the way, I couldn't do anyway, since I'm not a nutritionist. So how did I acquire the knowledge presented here, you are probably wondering. After various failed attempts at self-help, I consulted an expert. After that, I deepened the knowledge I had gained with the help of literature, online research and by sharing my personal experiences with other people, and I put it to the practical test by trying it out further.

I summarize all these findings in this book. I take you with me to the coaching sessions with my nutritionist, take a closer look at the background behind her advice, use specific scientific studies to show why the underlying principles have been tried and tested, describe how I personally implement them and the experiences I have had in doing so,

and provide you with tips for applying them yourself. To make it even easier for you to integrate these tips into your everyday life, I have come up with an action element at the end of each chapter, which should make it as easy as possible for you to put them into practice with precise, action-oriented instructions.

To be clear about this: what I describe in this book is not mere theory that I have concocted. The content of this book is based on my actual experiences of transforming myself from an overweight guy, dissatisfied with himself and his life, into a man of normal weight, almost 40 years old, who has lost over half a hundred pounds and seems much more attractive as a result of this weight loss. He has gained enormous self-confidence and now goes through life much more buoyantly and with newfound vigor.

And the best part is, you don't have to scour through all the women's magazines and familiarize yourself with the latest "last-minute bikini cauliflower diet." All it takes are a few simple principles and small rules to follow.

I wasn't an expert on losing weight at all at the beginning either – and I still wouldn't really call myself one today. Nevertheless, I was able to achieve my weight loss goal by trying out different approaches and first finding out what, at least for me, didn't work. And then I sought advice and got expert tips. These really helped me. I then further developed and optimized the method I had found. And that's how my own weight loss method came about, which I simply call "Weight Loss Relaxed".

If you are wondering what prompted me to write down my method in this book, here are three thoughts on the matter.

Yes, there are already quite a few weight loss guides. But every author has their own approach. And there are also dozens of different diets. Not every one of them has to work for every person who wants to lose weight. Not every body is the same, and everyone has their personal preferences. So I think it's fair to say that for every person who wants to lose weight, there is a book that offers a method and approach that he or she can best identify with and successfully lose weight with.

This book shows you a simple yet proven way to achieve the weight loss success you desire. I would like to motivate you to seriously tackle this unpleasant topic, about which far too much has already been written and discussed, and not to put it off any longer. I often hear the sentence, “I should actually lose weight too...”. The time has come to stop saying “I should have to”. This book should be the starting point for “I'm going to lose weight”.

My very personal weight loss story, which follows in the next chapter, should show you what is possible, even if you consider yourself a totally hopeless case, as I did.

If I could make a wish for you, my reader, it would be this: I hope you experience the same indescribable joy that I felt when I looked at my before and after photos and realized that I had actually lost 60 pounds after all my initial failures! This will give you a huge boost and significantly increase your self-confidence and self-esteem. It can even become a catalyst for your entire life and lead to you making a fresh start and celebrating unexpected successes. Being satisfied with yourself and your body can have this kind of hard-to-imagine effect.

And if you are now ready to go on this journey with me, then I invite you to look back with me at how my weight loss journey began. I am sure you will discover some parallels to yourself, and maybe even something new.

Chapter 1

My Story

Eleven. Twelve. Arrrgh... Thirteen. Come on, two more! Fourteen... Five-t-e-e-n... Paaahh! I'm completely exhausted. I let my head sink onto the mat and stretch my arms and legs. My pulse is racing. I lie on my back like a pumping cockchafer. Beads of sweat have formed on my forehead and are now running down my temples. I reach for my towel to dry them.

After a few deep breaths to catch my breath, I struggle to my feet. I feel slightly dizzy in the head. As I stand there, reeling, the cool air from the air conditioning, which I feel is set too cold, blows in my face. I wipe my left upper arm with it and notice how penetratingly my high-tech functional shirt smells of my sweat. I greedily take the last two sips from my water bottle and end my workout for today.

On my way to the locker room, I briefly stop at the scales. 86.3 kg (190.2 lbs) – not a bit less than last time. I am disappointed and wonder why I am still putting myself through this torture. In the locker room, the thick air, saturated with a mixture of sweat and men's deodorant spray, greets me. The perceived 90 degrees (30°C) and the high humidity contribute to this particularly oppressive indoor climate, which you have to experience to really understand its repulsive effect.

In the shower, I wash the sweat off my skin. To my left and right, I get involuntary glimpses of naked, wet, muscle-bound bodies, down to the tiniest detail, which often appear tiny in relation to the mighty bodies. I, with my rather bulky body shape, feel out of place here, which doesn't exactly motivate me, but rather makes me doubt whether this is the right place for my body reshaping.

I walk home, enjoying the fresh air at last, and reward myself with a sandwich for dinner when I get home, since I was busy in the studio beforehand.

I stick to this fitness routine of two to three times a week for a good six months. Since the hoped-for success on the scales fails to materialize, I eventually lose all motivation and give up the gym.

Nevertheless, my belief in losing weight through fitness training has been severely damaged, but I let my membership subscription, for just under 20 euros (~23 dollars) per month, continue for another two and a half years. In the bold hope that I will be able to bring myself to do it again at some point.

Mission gym: failed.

*****

Many months later...

In the meantime, I have gained more weight and now weigh around 90 kilograms (198 pounds). In an advertisement, I see a well-known TV host that I remember from a game show that aired about 15 years ago. A quote from him in my grandma's pharmacy magazine advertises a weight-loss shake. It sounds tempting: "The magic formula for metabolism", with lots of great-sounding ingredients that are supposed to help the body lose weight quickly and easily. I let myself be convinced and dare to try it myself.

The powder for the shakes is sold in rather large, cylindrical tins. A tin costs around 16 euros (~19 dollars). I get them from my local supermarket. As described, I replace all three daily meals with a shake – morning, noon, and night.

And surprise, surprise, the first few pounds start to drop! Since I want to continue losing weight, I extend the recommended "first phase", in which you should drink three shakes a day, and for four weeks I practically live off shakes. This really works... I get used to it and, contrary to expectations, I hardly feel hungry or have any other withdrawal symptoms.

But after losing 4 kilos (8.8 lbs), my weight loss process stagnates. And at some point, the daily shake meals get too monotonous for me and I get sick of them. They also start to cost a lot. That's why I switch from the expensive brand product to a (only half as expensive) noname shake from the drugstore. I don't notice much of a difference. But the problem remains: I just can't lose any more pounds.

So I stop my shake diet and go back to my old, "proper" food. As a result, the lost pounds are back in no time. The total, lightning-fast yo-yo effect hits me mercilessly. I am disillusioned and think, then it was all for nothing! And I could have saved myself the weeks of shake-drinking.

Mission weight loss shake: failed.

*****

Many months later...

I am still on the trip of wanting to lose weight as quickly and easily as possible. At the market-dominating online retailer, where we can order just about anything these days, I discover fat burner pills that are supposed to burn excess body fat with supposedly highly effective, natural ingredients. They are talking about a power formula with guarana and caffeine. They also contain vitamins and minerals that are supposed to ensure a normal metabolism. So it's exactly what I need! I order a pack of 100 capsules for about 25 euros (~29 dollars).

I'm supposed to take two to three capsules a day with enough liquid. I do this for a week or two. I don't notice any particular effect. I also don't lose any weight. So I lose faith in the product promise and leave the half-full jar of weight loss pills on my kitchen counter without taking them anymore or paying any further attention to them. I have lost all faith in easy-to-take and "highly effective" weight loss aids in pill form.

Mission weight loss pill: failed.

*****

Many months later...

In the meantime, I had passed the oh-so-distinctive, terrible 100-kilo (~220 lbs) mark. I said to myself, “That's it! I've had enough!” Now, finally, I had to stop gaining weight! It didn't help much: my weight continued to rise and couldn't be stopped by the 100-kilo mark.

During my retraining, a classmate told me about a so-called metabolic cure. He had tried it himself with good results and told me about an acquaintance who allegedly even had to stop the cure after two weeks because he had lost more than 10 kilos (22 lbs), more than he wanted. Lose 10 kilos or more in a few short weeks? My interest is piqued!

Coincidentally, a few days later, an information session is taking place in Magdeburg, at which two experts, a former teacher and his wife, who undergo this cure once a year, provide background information and credibly present their own successes with the help of photos.

It turns out that the two now make a living from recommending this metabolism cure and receive commission payments when they recruit customers. That makes me a little skeptical. But the fact that they can prove the effectiveness itself makes me think that if it actually works, it's okay for them to advertise it and inform other people about it.

My classmate also leaves me a book about this special metabolism cure, which I only briefly skim through. During my research, I discover other providers of such cures. Basically, the concept of the 21-day metabolism cure convinces me. It promises to achieve holistic well-being, from weight loss to better skin, in just three weeks by taking various high-quality food supplements that, among other things, consist of superfoods, “fully potent, purely plant-based nutrients”.

I'm about to order a 21-day complete package. Only the rather high price, over 250 euros (~290 dollars), is holding me back. Also, at the same time, I somehow came into contact with an alternative practitioner who told me that the products of this company were pure light and also encouraged me to try the treatment.

If it hadn't been for the high price, I would have ordered it long ago. So I kept a metabolism cure as a possibly working method in the back of my mind for now.

*****

Many months later...

During a visit to my general practitioner, I mention my desire to lose weight. In addition to general tips such as a balanced diet, sufficient exercise, light, regular fitness training, she recommends that I seek professional advice from a nutritionist. If this person is certified, my health insurance will cover 80% of the consultation costs – which was an important criterion for me.

In Magdeburg, I only find one certified nutritionist who has her practice right around the corner from me. Her name is Nicole Lins. I arrange a consultation with her and tell her about my previous ordeal – my failed attempts at dieting.

I also mention that I have to take this medication. Ms. Lins confirms to me that it slows down my metabolism and says specifically: "Mr. Rudnik, you have to work twice as hard to lose weight as other people." I think, great, how am I ever going to manage that *like this*...?! But she encourages me.

We perform a BIA[1] measurement, in which a weak electrical current is passed through my body and a number of my body values, such as my lean mass, fat mass and water balance, are precisely determined.

The measurement shows that I have a lot of visceral fat, i.e. fat around the organs, which is potentially very dangerous to my health. The nutritionist then recommends that I do a liver fast. This would specifically break down the fat around the liver. She supports the liver fast according to Dr. Worm.

Basically, the liver fast is very similar to the metabolism cure I had previously learned, and also to the intake of weight-loss shakes – only it is scientifically more sound. The

[1] bioelectrical impedance analysis, or BIA for short

liver fast lasts 14 days. The main component is a protein shake that you mix and drink. The diet also includes lots of vegetables. The focus is not on losing a lot of weight, but on regenerating the fatty liver. I was persuaded and invested the approximately 180 euros (210 dollars) in my liver health.

The two-week liver fast went without a hitch. Afterwards, I performed another BIA measurement on Ms. Lins. My visceral fat had decreased and I had lost about four pounds. Ms. Lins considered this a success. I took note of this favorably. However, I had secretly hoped for a greater weight loss at the same time. After all, my liver was now doing better.

Liver fast mission: successful, but more hoped for.

*****

A short time later...

I had gained confidence in Ms. Lins and so we continued our work together. She explained to me that the best way to lose weight sustainably and stay healthy was to change my eating habits and adopt healthy ones. I understood this and trusted her, because she was the expert and had already helped a number of people who had failed with their own attempts and now no longer knew what to do. And I fell into precisely this category of people wanting to lose weight.

So Ms. Lins managed to realistically adjust my expectations and help me to let go of the belief that I could lose weight quickly and easily, as the weight loss industry tried to make me believe with their catchy headlines.

She showed me a way that was feasible for me and promised that if I stuck to it continuously, I would lose weight too – despite my difficult circumstances.

During the four or five counseling sessions, I was able to ask all my questions and received enlightening answers. In short, this nutrition consultation, which ultimately only cost me – I don't even remember exactly – something around 70–80 euros (80-90

dollars), since I myself only had to bear 20% of the costs, was not only extremely well-invested money, but also laid the foundation for my 66-pound weight loss and my further insights that I gained in the process.

That's why I'll be taking you with me to the talks with Ms. Lins, especially in the main part of this book, where I developed my weight loss formula from it, and I'll tell you exactly what I learned in it and take a closer look at the individual insights.

To do justice to the casual, personal character of this book, I'll call Ms. Lins by her first name, Nicole, from now on, even though we use formal addresses in real life.

So, my conclusion is...

Mission change of diet: successful! Has brought the big breakthrough.

Background information on my life

- At the beginning of my weight loss journey, I was 38 years old. I am 5′ 10″ tall and had a maximum weight of 237 lbs.
- I was slim for the first 33 years of my life. At 31 years old, I still weighed 150 lbs, which resulted in a BMI (body mass index) of 21.5. This meant I had a normal weight.
- I could eat whatever I wanted! Large portions with seconds, four meals a day, unhealthy things like sweet cornflakes for breakfast, almost a liter (33.8 fl oz) of milk a day, with lots of sugary cocoa powder stirred in, chocolate in between meals or one or two bags of crisps in the evening couldn't harm me.
- I was never a big sports fanatic or super "fit" person, but I was always active. As a teenager, I played soccer, rode my bike, played table tennis, and paddled in a folding boat. In my twenties, I went jogging sporadically, still rode my bike a lot, and did trial training sessions at the gym.
- From the age of 33, I had to take medication that severely affected my (previously healthy) metabolism.

- The result was a gradual, steady weight gain over a period of 5 - 6 years. From about 158 lbs to 176 lbs, then 198 lbs, then I cracked the demoralizing 200-pound mark and peaked at 237 lbs.
- My slow metabolism was joined by a lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet as further factors influencing my weight gain. I ate too many potato chips and peanut puffs, drank too many sweetened drinks, plus beer and wine, enjoyed too much fast food, sweets, cakes, etc.
- So at around 37 years old, I weighed 237 lbs, which gave me a BMI of 34.1. I was almost at obesity grade 2, which starts at a BMI of 35.
- Negative circumstances in my life at the time were a lack of professional success, a lack of social support (hardly any friends, or none close to me), health problems, especially mental ones, caused by overwork, self-made stress, lack of money, loneliness, emotional rollercoaster rides through fleeting acquaintances, irregular and too little sleep.
- I fell into a deep hole. My search for a permanent partner was exasperating. Professionally, I was in a state of crisis: as an engineer, I had not been able to gain a foothold; my first attempt at self-employment at the time had failed. I fell into a great lack of drive and a moderately severe, depressive mood. I looked anxiously into an uncertain future. A vocational rehabilitation with a complete reorientation and subsequent retraining was necessary, which took years.
- I longed for closeness and togetherness, intimacy and love, and signed up for a dozen dating apps. For a real-life partner search, I didn't meet enough women who were interesting to me in my everyday life (I hardly ever went to events, and certainly not to discos), and I was too shy to approach women.
- Online dating was an emotional rollercoaster, a huge waste of time, with fakes, disappointment and frustration. Too much effort, too few dates that were unsuccessful. It also made me feel down and undermined my self-esteem. I searched online for a partner for a good seven years without success and with no end to my frustrations.
- In addition to all these major problems, I spent a total of about five years looking for a weight loss method that worked for me.

To illustrate, here are a few photos of me...



Slim

~154 lbs

2010-2011

Fat

~220 lbs

2019-2020

„Normal“

~176 lbs

2021

How did this relaxed weight loss concept come about?

The “Weight Loss Relaxed” concept was born out of necessity. More precisely, because as a fat Björn, I was just too lazy and lethargic, and my inner demon kept me from doing even light exercise regularly. I am well aware that I could probably have lost weight faster with additional exercise. Building muscle would have done me good too, since muscles burn fat. But I just couldn't bring myself to do it...

During my intensive, one-year weight loss phase, I made exactly three attempts to get into sports. Since I used to like running when I was slimmer, an article in which the focus was on losing weight through interval training appealed to me. The author wrote that realistically, 9-11 pounds of fat could be burned per month. To do this, you should run short units at a high intensity, which could be interrupted by breaks to catch your breath.

I had tried that – and failed miserably. My body was just too flabby and I was no longer in sufficient condition. After the first interval, my pulse was racing and I was gasping for air, as if I were about to collapse. In addition, the strain on my body, which weighed over 200 lbs, was taking its toll on my knees. I got knee pain.

So I stopped each of the three attempts at running that I had started every few months, and came to the conclusion: it must be possible to do it without exercise. From then on, I concentrated fully on changing my diet. It worked. My relaxed approach actually worked.

Action element

Here is the first action element, which you will find at the end of each chapter.

As a first, small task, I would like you to reflect on my weight loss story that you have just experienced. Here are a few questions:

1. To what extent do you recognize yourself in my story?

2. Have you tried similar weight loss methods? What were your results?

3. What can you take away from my experiences?

4. What methods have you tried so far? Were they successful or not?

5. What feelings and thoughts did you have during your own weight loss attempts?

Write down your answers so that you can find them again later – in a diary/notebook or a file (maybe even stored online), such as a Google Doc. This mental exercise will help you to process your experiences so far and prepare you for your own journey and the upcoming chapters. Now it's your turn! Come on, join in :-)

Chapter 2

Find Your Motivation To Lose Weight

Why is it important to find out your personal motivators for losing weight?

I would like to give you a personal example to illustrate the importance of motivation. I was slim for 35 years. Then my life changed abruptly. Due to an unhealthy diet, a lack of exercise and a medication I had to take, I gained weight steadily. Within about 3 to 4 years, my weight rose from about 154 lbs to 237 lbs at its peak. So that was around 82 lbs more. This gave me a severe depressive mood. The extra pounds brought with them many problems that I had never known before.

My personal struggle

Suddenly it became difficult to build new interpersonal relationships or even enter into a partnership. And I longed so much for closeness and togetherness. But the women who interested me just didn't look at me anymore. I was still primarily attracted to slim to normal-weight women. Just because I had become fuller, my ideal of women had not changed.

But these women ignored me now. I felt invisible and unimportant. This lack of attention and interest from others greatly affected my self-confidence. I began to doubt myself, and my charisma became negative. These negative feelings ran like a red thread through my life and led to me having less success in my job and social life. I had always been a quiet, rather reserved guy anyway, who was rarely shy. Now everything just got more depressing.

It was a constant downward spiral of weight gain, self-doubt and negative experiences. In the vocational training class I was in at the time, a classmate once remarked that I gave the impression of being Sid the sloth, from the movie of the same name – so slow and breathing heavily before I could answer the teacher's question. I'm sure she meant well. But I really didn't want to come across like a sloth! I just wanted my Björn back, the one who easily and casually jogged up the stairs in the subway stations of Vienna while maintaining a relaxed and cool expression on his face...

In short, I was extremely dissatisfied with myself and my life at the time. This dissatisfaction, in turn, was my great motivation.

Let's take a look at the very personal reasons a person can have for losing weight.

What personal motivators are there?

Every person is unique, and so the reasons why someone wants to lose weight are different. Here are some examples of personal motivators:

- Health reasons: Many people want to lose weight to improve their health. You may have noticed that you get out of breath more quickly or that your joints hurt. Your doctor may have advised you to lose weight to reduce your risk of developing diseases such as diabetes or heart disease.
- Family and friends: Your family and friends can be a strong motivation. Perhaps you want to be around for your children or grandchildren longer. Or you want to be able to actively participate in family activities without feeling restricted.

- Self-confidence and self-esteem: Many people do not feel comfortable in their own skin and would like to boost their self-confidence. If you lose weight, you may feel more comfortable in your own skin and more daring to try new things or show yourself in public.
- Quality of life: Weight can have a major impact on your quality of life. Maybe you just want to be able to move more freely and easily again. Or you want to be able to wear certain items of clothing in which you feel comfortable and attractive.
- Career: In some professions, being overweight can be a hindrance. You may want to lose weight to perform better at your job or to progress in your career more easily.

My most important personal motivators were these...

- I wanted to find a girlfriend who met my expectations.
- I wanted to go through life with more joy and ease again.
- I wanted to be able to confidently take my clothes off on the beach in summer without feeling ashamed of my fat belly and the stares of others.
- I didn't want a big belly anymore that got in the way when tying my shoes or bending over.
- I didn't want to see that round, fat face in the mirror or in photos every morning, the sight of which didn't make me feel good.
- I wanted to finally be able to shop in my favorite fashion stores from my slim times, where I could buy the clothes that I found chic and fashionable, and not the ones in the big, wide sizes, from that one well-known run-of-the-mill brand or even from the budget store, in whose cheap designs I felt unsexy.

How do you find out what motivates you?

It's not always easy to recognize your deepest motivation. Here are some steps that can help you:

- Self-reflection: Take time to think about your motives. What are the real reasons why you want to lose weight? What situations have shown you that you need a change? Remember very specific everyday situations or statements or reactions from people around you. Here are two specific examples...
    - My husband doesn't seek physical contact as much anymore and doesn't feel as much like having sex with me as he did when I was slimmer. Instead, he looks at skinny women on the street.
    - I'd like to be able to play ball with my child more actively and with more stamina, and not break a sweat doing it.
- Keep a diary: Write down your thoughts and feelings. A diary can help you organize your thoughts and recognize patterns. Note how you feel in different situations and what motivates you to lose weight.
- Have conversations: Talk to friends, family or a therapist about your intentions. Sometimes an outsider can help you see things more clearly and recognize your true motivations.
- Visualization: Imagine what your life will look like when you have achieved your goal. How do you feel? What can you do that you might not be able to do now? This visualization can help you to see your motivators more clearly.
- Ask questions: Ask yourself "why?" and keep digging until you find the real reason. For example: "Why do I want to lose weight? To feel better. Why do I want to feel better? Because I'm uncomfortable in my own skin." And so on.

Note down and visualize your motivators

Once you have found your personal motivators, it is important to write them down and visualize them regularly. Here are some methods that can help you do this:

- Create a list: Write a list of your most important motivators. Keep it in a journal or somewhere you will see it often, such as on the refrigerator or bathroom mirror. This constant reminder can help you stay focused.
- Create a vision board: A vision board is a visual representation of your goals and dreams. Collect pictures, quotes, and other elements that motivate and inspire

you. Hang the board in a place where you can see it daily. It can remind you why you are taking this journey and what you want to achieve.

- Visualize your goals: Take a few minutes each day to imagine what your life will be like when you reach your goal. Close your eyes and picture how you feel, what you look like, and what you are doing. This positive visualization can help you stay motivated and focused on your goal.
- Create reminders: Insert small reminders into your daily routine that will remind you of your motivators. These can be notes at your workplace, a special piece of jewelry or a background image on your cell phone. These little reminders can make a big difference.

Example: The power of visualization

Imagine you want to lose weight because you finally want to run around in the park with your kids without being out of breath after five minutes. You find a picture of a family playing in the park and stick it on your vision board. Every morning before you go to work, you look at this picture and imagine yourself running and laughing with your children. You feel the joy and energy that you will have. This visualization gives you the strength to persevere, even when things get tough.

Summary

Finding your personal motivators is crucial to your success in losing weight. They give you a clear reason and direction for your journey. Whether it's your relationships with others, your health, your family, your self-confidence or your career, these motivators are what drive you. By taking the time to identify them, write them down, and visualize them, you can refer to them again and again to keep you motivated along the way. Visualizations and small daily reminders will help you stay focused and committed. Because ultimately, it's not just about losing weight, but especially about living a happier and more fulfilling life.

Action item

Before you read on, take time to do these tasks to identify and visualize your personal motivators for losing weight. These steps will help you create a solid foundation for your weight loss journey.

Step 1: Self-reflection

- Take 30 minutes to think about your reasons for losing weight.
- Write down five reasons why you want to lose weight. Be honest with yourself and think of situations in which you felt uncomfortable.

Step 2: Keep a diary

- Start a diary in which you write down your thoughts and feelings about losing weight.
- Write a page about how you currently feel in your body and what you want to change.

Step 3: Have conversations

- Talk to someone close to you (friend, family member or therapist) about your intention to lose weight.
- Write down the most important points from this conversation in your diary. What helped you to see your reasons more clearly?

Step 4: Visualization

- Imagine your life when you have achieved your weight loss goal. What does your daily routine look like? How do you feel? What has changed? What effect do you want to have on other people?
- Describe this image in detail in your diary. Paint the scenes as vividly as possible.

Step 5: Create a vision board

- Collect images and quotes that motivate and inspire you. These can be from magazines, the internet or personal photos.
- Create a vision board by arranging these elements on a large sheet of paper or a bulletin board.
- Hang your vision board in a place where you see it every day, such as your bedroom or office.

Step 6: Create reminders

- Create little reminders in your daily life that will remind you of your motivators (e.g. notes, photos, wallpaper on your cell phone).
- Place at least three reminders around you. Note where you have placed them and why they motivate you.

Once you have completed all these tasks, you will have a clear picture of your personal motivators and feel empowered on your weight loss journey. This motivation will help you persevere and achieve your goals. Now you are ready to move on to the next section.

Chapter 3

Setting Realistic Weight Loss Goals

The importance of realistic goals

Setting the right weight loss goals is crucial to the success of your journey. Unrealistic expectations often lead to disappointment and can undermine your motivation. That's why it's important to set goals that are achievable, specific and measurable. Setting clear and realistic goals will make the journey to losing weight not only manageable, but also motivating and rewarding.

What were my goals?

I had one big goal in mind. I am 5′ 10″ tall and wanted to reach a weight of around 172 lbs. I hadn't set myself a deadline. But somehow I wanted to achieve it as quickly as possible, but definitely in a sustainable way. So that I could maintain the weight afterwards.

From the various attempts with weight-loss shakes or the liver fast, I had learned that, on the one hand, I usually miss overly ambitious goals and then I am very disappointed. Another elementary experience was the yo-yo effect that occurred after I had consumed weight-loss shakes for weeks. After I started eating “normally” again, the lost pounds were back on within a few days.

Talking to nutritionist Nicole also helped me. She recommended that I focus on making the switch to a healthy diet, set only very small intermediate goals, and stay focused. Step by step, my pounds would drop almost by themselves.

Let's take a closer look...

SMART goals

An effective approach to formulating your weight loss goals is to use SMART goals. This method helps you to clearly define your goals and make them realistic:

- Specific: Your goal should be clear and unambiguous. Instead of saying "I want to lose weight", formulate your goal more specifically: "I want to lose 10 pounds in the next three months".
- Measurable: A measurable goal helps you track your progress. Use specific numbers or dates to evaluate your success.
- Attractive: Your goal should be personally attractive and motivating to you. Consider why this goal is important to you.
- Realistic: Set goals that are achievable and realistic. Consider what is possible in your current lifestyle and how you can achieve these goals.
- Time-bound: Give your goal a clear time frame. An end date helps you stay focused and committed.

So much for that method. That's quite good. In addition to that, I would like to add the point of a big, overarching goal. That could be...

"I want to lose 50 pounds within a year and eat healthier to stay 'slim' in the long term."

We can then add the points of the SMART goals by renaming the first point, for example, "Small steps". This could then read...

"I want to lose 4 - 5 pounds every month."

This is a realistic goal. So 50 pounds within a year and about 5 pounds per month. That's achievable... And that also corresponded to my weight loss. I lost 2 to 5 pounds per month. Initially more like 5, later more like 3 or 2.

These five pounds per month are by no means set in stone, but are merely a realistic example. The more weight loss potential you have, the more you can lose each month. Someone who weighs 300 pounds can potentially lose as much as 10 pounds per month. So the amount of weight you lose each month is always relative to your body weight. That makes sense.

Small steps count

Many people set themselves big, ambitious goals that can often seem overwhelming. It is important to break down big goals into smaller, achievable steps. These smaller intermediate goals help you to see progress and stay motivated. Every small success brings you closer to your big goal and gives you the motivation you need to keep going.

The journey is the goal

It's easy to focus on the end result and overlook the process. However, the journey to your goal is just as important as the goal itself. Every healthy decision, every healthy meal and every little movement counts. Enjoy and celebrate the small successes along the way. These achievements show you that you are making progress and help you to stay motivated.

Example: If you regularly prepare healthy meals, integrate small exercise sessions into your daily routine and consciously pay attention to your eating habits, you will notice that these small steps lead to a healthier lifestyle. The process itself becomes a source of pride and motivation.

Action element

Now take some time to formulate and plan your weight loss goals. These steps will help you develop a clear direction and structure for your weight loss journey.

- 1. Formulate a major goal that you would like to achieve in the next 6 - 12 months. Make sure that it is specific, measurable, attractive, realistic and scheduled.
- 2. Break down your main goal into smaller intermediate goals. These should be achievable within shorter periods of time (e.g. monthly or quarterly).
- 3. Write down at least three intermediate goals in your journal or on a piece of paper.

After you've completed this task, you'll have clear and actionable goals to help you stay on track. Now you're ready to read the next section and continue your weight loss journey.

Chapter 4

Find Supporters For Your Weight Loss Plan

When it comes to losing weight, many people think of diet plans and counting calories first, but another crucial factor is often overlooked: support from others.

While you are the main person in your weight loss project, support from your social environment is important for several reasons. The people around us have to do their part to support us in our change. They can increase our motivation, give us support and thus make it easier for us to reach our goal. In difficult moments, supporters can help us to persevere and not lose focus.

On the other hand, if others lack the necessary understanding of our project, it can be a challenge for us as a slimming person to maintain the right course to achieve our goal.

The journey to a healthier you will be less lonely and often more successful if you can rely on the support of partners, family and friends. In this chapter, I'll show you how to build a strong network of supporters and why it's the key to your lasting weight loss success.

My personal experiences

At first, I approached my weight loss plan all by myself, on my own. And I failed. Whether it was the regular fitness training that I couldn't keep up with, or the lost hope

of maintaining the achieved result in the long term after weeks of taking the supposedly effective weight loss shakes advertised in the commercials. Neither succeeded.

During a routine visit to my general practitioner, I revealed my desire to lose weight. She then recommended a nutrition consultation, which would be subsidized by my health insurance. That's how I found Nicole Lins, who is a state-certified dietician and medical nutritionist and has an office very close to me. The comprehensive consultation with her was the cornerstone of my weight loss journey.

At the time, my best friend Romy was also unhappy with her figure, and I found a supporter in her with whom I could exchange experiences. We tried the same weight-loss shakes and reported on each other's successes.

I let my parents and grandmother know about my plans in passing. At the time, I was living alone, didn't have a partner, and only saw my immediate family sporadically. When it was time for another meal with my father and stepmother, I explained that I would skip the side dish because I had started a serious weight loss attempt. This helped her to understand.

With my then 95-year-old grandmother, who I visited every two weeks, it was usually more difficult. She always invited me for coffee and cake first, and after our weekly shopping, there were still open-faced sandwiches for supper a few hours later. This didn't really fit into my diet plan and I had to make a clear request for understanding to reduce this high calorie intake within such a short time. So we agreed on just one piece of cake and a sandwich with sausage in the evening. That was one of my "treat exceptions" every two weeks that I was with her, so to speak.

It also took several attempts to persuade my mom to categorically refuse the popular afternoon ice cream treat. She kept asking if I wouldn't rather have a frozen portion of "Fürst Pückler" or "Schwarzwälder Kirsch" (a layered ice cream dessert) after all, but somehow I was ultimately able to convince her to give my weight loss plans a chance.

In retrospect, I could have gotten all of them on board even more by communicating even more openly and clearly, and I could have won them over as even better supporters

of my change project by providing additional information and persuasion. Yes, I should have made them my supporters. More on that later.

Nobody's perfect, and mistakes happen the first time. What I learned from this will benefit you later in this chapter.

One more anecdote on the side... After I told my former boss about the diet I started the previous week at a team breakfast, he just remarked, “Now before Christmas...?” He was alluding to the fact that he considers the time of year, with all the sweet temptations of this time as well as the upcoming holiday roast, to be problematic. This statement spurred my ambition. And lo and behold... thanks to the calorie-reduced preparation method, I was able to stick to my diet plan with a menu I had prepared myself for Christmas Eve, without a nasty surprise on the scales the next day.

With this, I just want to give you a brief insight into the various reactions and resistance you can expect on your journey to a slimmer you.

The real problem that I recognized

Of course, everyone always means well with you and offers you seconds or dessert just out of politeness. Or I often heard sentences like, “Oh boy, what you're eating isn't enough. You're a strong man and need something proper. Have some more of this or that. And more sauce!”

First of all, it often takes a lot of self-control to remain calm and politely decline. It's not that I don't like to eat dumplings and roast with delicious gravy, cake or ice cream. Quite the opposite! And here it became an inner conflict for me again and again. “I like to eat it, but I want to lose weight. That's why I want to stay strong,” it was clear to myself. But then I had to defend myself against well-intentioned offers that undermined my strictness. Often I would then give in and let myself be dissuaded from my restrictive line. Also, because I wanted to be polite and didn't want to refuse.

So I often let myself be talked into it, which was only because I had previously made it too vague and not clear enough and had brought all family members over to my side. So unclear communication put me in a difficult position to explain and caused me to have conflicts of conscience.

Then often followed by a postscript, such as, “But *today you* can make an exception ...” This statement is also well-intentioned, but it must be argued against. Because only I know how strictly or unstrictively I follow my diet and what exceptions I already allow myself on days when my family is not around. She assumes that I am always on the ball. They don't know that this is not the case and that I also have to overcome and motivate myself. Often I then struggle with myself and think, “Yes come on, the one exception...” But it was usually not just the one, but quite a few exceptions.

So I was not only fighting against my own weakness, but also against these supposedly well-intentioned “undermining attempts” of my nutrition plan. Two against one, if you will. It was often very hard!

Nevertheless, I was ultimately successful and managed to lose the aforementioned 66 lbs within a year without exercise.

Why most people lose weight alone

Many of us try to go it alone on the road to weight loss. We think we have to do it on our own. Losing weight is often something we do in secret, hoping that the change will soon be visible and that others will be surprised. Short-term motivation becomes the driving factor – you start enthusiastically, only to give up in frustration later when the first hurdles arise. Perhaps you have already experienced friends and family withdrawing or even reacting critically when you tell them about your plan.

These solo efforts are based on the belief that you have to be strong and independent. You don't want to be a burden to anyone or have to justify your actions. But this can quickly lead to isolation. There is no one to catch you when your motivation wanes. No shoulder to lean on when the temptation is great.

Why it doesn't work

Losing weight alone often leads to loneliness and a lack of motivation. Imagine fighting temptations every day without anyone to understand or support you. The feeling of not having to answer to anyone can cause you to let your guard down. If no one notices when you give in, it's easy to talk yourself into excuses.

Without emotional support, you lack the anchor that pulls you through difficult times. It's no secret that losing weight can be an emotional rollercoaster. One day you feel strong and invincible, the next you doubt everything. Critical voices from friends or family, as described above, can be an additional burden and hinder your progress. A lack of understanding or even rejection can prevent you from talking openly about your challenges, further increasing your sense of isolation.

The better approach

Imagine having a team at your side. People who believe in you and encourage you. The path becomes easier immediately. Instead of going against the grain alone, you can draw on the strength of a group. Having supporters means you are not alone. Together, you can set and pursue goals. Regular check-ins and motivational sessions help you stay on track.

Transparency and openness in your plans are crucial. Tell your supporters what you want to achieve and why it is important to you. This creates understanding and strengthens the bond. Use social networks and groups to find like-minded people. There are numerous online communities where people support and motivate each other. These groups provide a platform for sharing successes and exchanging views on challenges.

Common goals create a strong connection. If you all pull together, success is more likely. It's not just about what you want to achieve, but also about how you can help each other. Regular meetings or online chats provide an opportunity to discuss progress and

motivate each other. Cooking together and exchanging recipes not only promotes good health, but also community spirit.

Steps for implementation

1. Identify potential supporters:

    - Look at your immediate environment: family, friends, colleagues.

    - Consider who has similar goals or wants to support you.

2. Communication and transparency:

    - Explain your goal and why it is important to you.

    - Ask for specific support, be it emotional, practical or motivational.

3. Plan joint activities:

- Plan regular meetings or online chats.
- Cook healthy meals together or share recipes.
- Set small challenges to keep motivation high.

4. Establish accountability:

- Arrange regular check-ins by phone, text or in person.
- Share progress reports and give each other feedback.

5. Emotional support:

    - Create space for conversations about ups and downs.

    - Encourage each other and show understanding.

Your weight loss journey doesn't have to be a lonely one. By building a network of supporters and supporters, you can fall back on a strong community to help you through ups and downs. These people will help you stay on track and achieve your goals. Let's be strong together – you don't have to do this alone.

Significant other and children

Your significant other is often the most important person in your life and can therefore be a tremendous support in your weight loss efforts. You are a team that goes through thick and thin together. So why not also embark on the path to a healthier life together? Your significant other's support can make all the difference between you persevering or giving up.

How your significant other can support you

1. set goals together:

Think together about how you can live healthier and set goals that you want to achieve together. These goals don't have to be identical, but they should be compatible. For example, if your partner is not aiming to lose weight, you can still work together on eating healthier and getting more exercise. A common goal could be to cook healthy meals together three times a week or to go for a walk every evening.

2. Cooking together:

Plan and cook healthy meals together. Not only can this be fun, but it can also ensure that you both stay on track. Use this time to try out new recipes and find out which healthy foods you both like. By cooking together, you can motivate and support each other to develop healthier eating habits. Imagine the two of you standing in the kitchen, cutting fresh vegetables and talking about your day.

3. motivational partner:

Be there for each other when one of you loses motivation. Remind each other of your goals and celebrate successes together. For example, if you don't feel like making healthy choices one day, your partner can remind you why you're doing this together. Small gestures, like a motivational message or a hug, can work wonders.

4. Share activities:

Do activities together that combine exercise and fun, such as walks or easy hikes. These activities not only strengthen your health, but also your relationship. You get to spend time together, talk about your progress, and support each other. One example could be a weekly walk in the park, where you enjoy nature and get some exercise at the same time.

Challenges and solutions

1. different goals:

If your partner doesn't want to lose weight, discuss how you can still live healthy lives together. Focus on shared interests, such as healthy eating or getting more exercise. It's not about both of you having exactly the same goals, but about supporting and motivating each other.

2. lack of time:

Plan fixed times for cooking and activities together so as not to add to the stress of your daily routine. Even if you both have busy schedules, you can find small windows of time to work on your goals together. For example, you can use the weekend to prepare healthy meals together that you can just heat up during the week.

Conversation template

Here is a conversation template for how you can approach your partner with a request, in which you explain your weight loss plan and ask for their support:

"Honey, I want to talk to you about something that is very important to me. I have decided that I want to reduce my weight in a healthy way. I know I've tried many methods before, but I'm determined to succeed this time.

It's important to me because I want to feel fitter and more comfortable in my own skin. I've noticed that I'm having a hard time doing this on my own, and I believe that with your support, I could be much more successful.

It would help me a lot if we could set some healthy goals together. Maybe we could plan and cook healthy meals together or go for walks in the evenings. If I have a low moment, it would mean a lot to me if you reminded me why I'm doing this and encouraged me to keep going.

I know that you may not have the same goals as me, but it's important to me that we tackle this together. What do you think?"

You can use this conversation template in a slightly modified form for other family members, friends, and colleagues/superiors.

Specific requests

If the question of how they can support you in a very specific way comes up, you can tell them these specific requests:

- It would be great if you didn't eat unhealthy snacks in front of me. This makes it easier for me to resist temptations.
- Could you support me by helping me to stop bringing unhealthy food into the house? This makes it easier for me to stick to healthy alternatives.
- I would appreciate it if you could use positive reinforcement instead of criticizing me when I have a bad day.
- When we go out to eat or order food, maybe we can look for healthier options together that we both like.
- Please help me stick to our plan by reminding me of our shared activities, such as cooking or our walks.

- When we meet for family gatherings, please keep in mind that I am now eating a healthy, low-calorie diet. If you are unsure, please ask me beforehand what I would like to eat and what I would prefer not to eat.
- Please avoid offering me a second helping or something sweet so as not to tempt me or cause me inner conflict. If I want to eat some more of this or that, I'll tell you.

Children in the household

Children can also be a great support, even if they are not directly involved in the weight loss plan. Their energy and curiosity can be a great motivation to establish healthy habits.

How your children can support you

1. Teach healthy habits:

Explain to your children why healthy eating is important and involve them in meal planning and preparation. Children love to be active and learn new things. Use this curiosity to teach them healthy eating habits. You can go to the market together, choose fresh fruit and vegetables and cook together at home.

2. Encourage exercise:

Go for active games or walks together. Children often have a lot of energy and can encourage you to move more. Play catch in the garden, go on bike rides or go swimming together. These activities not only promote your health, but also strengthen your bond. One example could be a weekly family sports day where you try out different activities.

3. Setting an example:

By making healthy choices, you set a positive example for your children that will shape them in the long term. Children learn by observing. If they see you choosing healthy foods and being active regularly, they are likely to adopt these habits.

Challenges and solutions

1. Different preferences:

Children don't always like the same food as adults. Find healthy recipes that the whole family will enjoy. Involve your children in choosing recipes and let them help with the preparation. This will make them more likely to like the food. For example, you could prepare healthy versions of popular dishes like pizza or burgers.

2. Time management:

Plan meals and activities to fit into your children's daily routine. Use weekends or free afternoons to establish healthy habits. Set fixed times for activities and meals together to create a routine. An example could be having breakfast together at the weekend, making healthy smoothies together.

Conclusion

The support of your partner and children can make all the difference in your weight loss journey. By working together on healthy habits, you'll not only improve your health but also strengthen your family bonds. Remember, it's not about getting everything perfect, but about taking steps in the right direction together. With the support of your loved ones, the path to a healthier life will not only be easier, but also more fulfilling.

Action element: Find and involve your supporters

Before you read on, take some time to do the following tasks:

- 1. Identify supporters: Make a list of people around you who could support you: significant other, children, other family members, friends and colleagues.
- 2. Approach them and ask for support:
    - Partner: Have an open conversation with your partner. Use the conversation template to explain your goals and needs.

    - Children: Explain the importance of healthy eating to your children and involve them in planning and preparing meals.
    - Family: Talk to parents and grandparents about how they can support you. They may want to try healthy recipes with you or go for walks together.
    - Friends: Share your weight loss goals with close friends. Ask them if they are interested in doing activities together, such as cooking or exercising.
    - Colleagues/boss: Discuss your goals with trusted colleagues or your boss. Ask for support, such as shared break activities or healthier options in the cafeteria.
- 3. Ask for specific support:
    - Arrange regular meetings or check-ins to discuss progress and motivate each other.
    - Plan joint activities and set aside specific times for them to integrate support into your daily routine.

Take time now to complete these tasks. Make a note of the results and reflect on how you can make the most of the help of your supporters. This is the only way to ensure that you are not fighting alone and that you achieve your goals more easily.

Let's get started!

Chapter 5

Illustrating The Current Situation

The journey to a healthier life begins with an honest look at the present. Before we set out to change our eating habits, we first need to understand where we are right now. Only then can we make targeted and effective improvements. But why is this so important? Imagine you want to go on a trip. Without knowing where you are right now, you can't make a plan to get to your destination.

Why is it important to look at your current diet and keep an accurate record of it?

Nutrition is a matter of habit. Many of us eat without really thinking about what and how much we eat. The first step to making a change is to make these habits visible.

- Recognizing your own habits: Did you know that many people underestimate how much they actually eat? One study showed that most of us underestimate our calorie intake by about 30%. If you're not aware of what you're eating, you can't know where to start.
- Identify weak points: Often it's the little snacks in between that add up. A cookie here, a latte there – and before you know it, you've unconsciously consumed a lot of extra calories.

- Basis for change: A detailed log is like a mirror. It shows you honestly and unvarnishedly what is really happening. Only then can you make targeted and informed changes.

My personal experiences

My nutrition coach Nicole also gave me a template for a food diary at our first meeting and asked me to keep a precise record for 7 days.

In the first few days, I only filled it out in the evening, looking back at the day. It wasn't that easy to remember exactly everything I ate during the day.

In the following days, I got into the habit of always having the copy template with me in my shoulder bag when I was out and about, so that I could make the relevant entry immediately after a meal or a drink. Overall, this was easier and saved me the extensive mental exercise of having to recall everything from memory in the late evening. It was not easy when I was tired in the evening after an eventful day.

Nicole used my completed diary to analyze my eating behavior. Based on this, she was able to give me specific tips on how to make my diet even healthier.

How to log your current eating habits

Now that we have established the importance of keeping a food diary as an indispensable method for gaining clarity, let's get specific.

Keeping a food diary:

Write down everything you eat and drink over a period of seven days. Really everything! Even the small things count. This one week should reflect your normal everyday life as much as possible. So don't pick a week when you're on an all-inclusive vacation, for example.

A food diary can be kept in a variety of formats – on paper or digitally. The important thing is to always have it handy during the day so that you can record what you eat or drink as soon as you do so.

The following information belongs in a food diary:

Date and weekday of the entry.

Time: Time of each meal or snack.

Type of meal: breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack.

Food and drinks: Detailed description, including ingredients

Quantities: Quantities in ounces, pints, numbers of items, etc.

Feelings and situations: Why do you eat? (e.g. hungry, stressed, bored).

Your reaction: How do you feel shortly afterwards? (full and satisfied, stomach ache, calmer, sluggish/tired)

Special notes: Additional comments on eating habits or abnormalities.

Document an entire day on one page to make your diary easier to keep track of. The Nutrition Planner in the Kickstart resource list contains a corresponding template that you can print out seven times and use for this purpose.

An example of a complete diary entry could look like this:

Monday:

- Breakfast (8:00 am):

- 1 slice of whole grain bread with butter and jam

- 1 cup of coffee with milk and 1 teaspoon of sugar

- Snack (10:30 am):

- 1 apple

- 1 glass of water

- Lunch (12:30 p.m.):

- 1 portion of spaghetti Bolognese (about 7oz)

- 1 small piece of garlic bread

- 1 glass of cola (11fl oz)

- Snack (3:00 p.m.):

1 chocolate bar (e.g. Snickers)

1 cup of tea with 1 teaspoon of sugar

Dinner (6:30 p.m.):

1 large slice of pizza (about 7 oz)

1 small mixed salad with dressing

- 1 glass of lemonade (8.45 fl oz)

- Snack (9 p.m.):

- 2 handfuls of crisps (about 1.76 oz)

- 1 glass of orange juice (6.76 fl oz)

How to keep a food diary:

- Write it down immediately: Don't wait until the end of the day, otherwise you'll forget details.
- Be honest: Only you will see this diary. It's okay to be honest. The point is to help yourself.

How to evaluate your food diary

Now that you've been keeping a record of everything for a week, it's time for the interesting part: the evaluation.

For me, this was done by expert Nicole. After a little research, I came across a simple method that Britta Probol describes in her article[2] for the NDR (a German TV channel) that anyone can use without being an expert. Thanks for the great article and this simple approach, Ms. Probol.

I have refined the method a bit, and here's how it works...

Get a pack of 5 different-colored highlighters, which you can find in supermarkets, specialist shops or online. Now go through each day, meal by meal, and highlight:

Vegetable portions in green

Snacks and sweets/sugary foods in pink

"White" meat in orange

"Red" meat in red

High-carbohydrate foods in blue

Here are some explanations

Vegetable portions: Mark in green

That should be easy. Everything that is a vegetable, you mark in green.

Snacks and sweets/sugary: Mark in pink

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2 https://www.ndr.de/ratgeber/gesundheit/Ernaehrungstagebuch-Vorlage-und-Ausfuelltipps,ernaehrungstagebuch100.html

Foods that are high in sugar can include sweets, snacks, drinks, ready meals or even “light/diet” products, which usually contain sugar substitutes. Here is a fairly comprehensive list...

Foods that contain sugar:

1. Sweets: chocolate and chocolate bars, gummy bears, candies, lollipops
2. Baked goods and pastries: cakes, cookies, muffins, doughnuts
3. Breakfast cereals: sugary cornflakes, sweetened muesli mixes, breakfast bars
4. Dairy products: sweetened yoghurt, fruit yoghurt, pudding, yoghurt drinks
5. Ready meals: jam and preserves, Nutella and other sweet spreads, ready-made salad dressings, ketchup and BBQ sauces
6. Snacks: sweetened dried fruit, cereal bars, sweetened popcorn, fruit snacks

Sugary drinks

1. Soft drinks: cola, lemonades, energy drinks, iced tea
2. Fruit juices and nectars: orange juice, apple juice, grape juice, fruit nectars
3. Coffee drinks: sweetened iced coffee, frappuccinos, flavored coffees
4. Alcoholic beverages: liqueurs, cocktails, sweet wines

Food and beverages with sugar substitutes:

1. diet and light drinks: diet coke, diet sodas, low-calorie energy drinks
2. Sweets and snacks: sugar-free sweets, sugar-free chewing gum
3. Dairy products: low-fat yoghurt, sugar-free pudding varieties
4. Baked goods and desserts: sugar-free biscuits, low-calorie desserts and puddings
5. Ready meals: sugar-free syrups and sauces, low-calorie dressings
6. Coffee drinks: sugar-free flavor syrups, diet iced coffees

If you're unsure, look explicitly at the nutritional information on each food or beverage package of the things you consume.

I know it takes a little time to get used to. It's tedious and takes time. But it's worth the effort, because it makes you aware of how much sugar, or equally harmful sugar substitutes, are actually contained in all sorts of foods.

“White” meat & fish: highlight in orange

1. Poultry: chicken, turkey, duck
2. Rabbit
3. Fish and seafood: Lean fish such as cod, sole and tilapia, shrimp and other shellfish

“Red” meat: Mark in red

1. Beef (steaks, minced meat, roast beef, roast beef)
2. Pork (pork chops, roast pork, pork schnitzel, bacon)
3. Lamb (lamb chops, leg of lamb, roast lamb, lamb fillet (“lamb salmon”))
4. Veal (veal schnitzel, roast veal, veal chops)
5. Goat
6. Game meat (venison, roe deer, wild boar)

And finally, in our little color theory...

High in carbohydrates: Mark in blue

These are in particular these popular foods and side dishes:

- all types of bread, rolls, croissants, cakes and pastries
- potatoes, chips, crisps
- rice and pasta
- muesli, cornflakes

Sometimes a food may be both very sugary and high in carbohydrates. In this case, use both colors, pink and blue. An example of this is a sweetened muesli mix. Use the thin tip of the highlighter to mark the word “ready-to-eat muesli” in blue at the bottom, then in pink above. So two colors.

Analyzing food groups:

Once you have marked each day of your food diary in color as described above, you will now have seven sheets of paper with various color-coded terms in front of you. Now take a closer look at each color group. How often does it appear?

- Green = vegetables: Do you eat vegetables every day?
- Pink = sugar: How much sweet/sugary do you eat (daily)?
- Orange = white meat: How often do you eat white meat and fish?
- Red = red meat: How often do you eat red meat?
- Carbohydrates: How often do you eat a lot of carbohydrates? With every meal, every day?

Drinks:

Add up your daily beverage consumption. How many liters do you consume in a day, including coffee, water, juice, cola, etc.? How much of it is water, coffee or sugary drinks?

Evaluation of eating times and quantities:

Are your meals regular and balanced or do you have many snacks between meals? Take a look at when you eat the most and what situations or feelings lead to this. How many meals do you have in total during the day? Do you also eat in the late evening?

Who can help you with the evaluation

You don't have to do this admittedly time-consuming evaluation, which requires some familiarization with the food groups, alone. But it is possible! And I really wanted to give you this method, which I think is practical for laypeople, as a tool.

You can find help with this evaluation from experts such as nutritionists or in the form of a plethora of digital helpers.

There are well-advertised apps that can help you track and analyze your diet. You'll find them by searching for “food diary app.” I haven't tried any of them myself yet. I've read that many of them are often too extensive, overloaded with advertising, then want to charge money for the better premium version, and can do a lot more than you actually need for this task here. Therefore, I recommend that you stick with the highlighter method described here.

Common mistakes

There are a few pitfalls to avoid when recording your current eating habits. These are...

- Incomplete logs: Don't forget to write down absolutely everything, including small snacks and drinks. These can quickly add up.
- Inaccurate quantities: Be as precise as possible to get a realistic picture. Don't guess, weigh if possible.
- Self-deception: Be honest with yourself. There is no point in deceiving yourself. You are the only one who sees this diary, so be open and honest.
- Lack of consistency: Keep the diary consistently for the full seven days, with no exceptions. It may seem exhausting, but it's worth it.

Summary

The insights you gain from your food diary are the key to a successful and sustainable change in diet. Here are two final thoughts on this...

Use your insights:

What have you learned? Where are your weak points? What habits do you want to change?

First step towards change:

Knowing exactly what your current situation is is the first step on the road to your goal. Now you can make targeted changes and integrate these new habits into your life step by step.

Your food diary is not just a tool, but your personal guide to a healthier and happier life. You are in control and can make this change. Stick with it and be proud of every small step you take. You can do it! Later in this book, we will adjust your diet plan based on the analysis of your food diary. Without this step, we won't be able to continue properly later on. So, take it seriously.

Action element

Before you read on, take the time to complete the following tasks:

- 1. Start your food diary:
    - Select a form: Decide whether you want to use a digital diary (app) or a paper notebook.
    - Prepare your diary: Get a notebook and set up the columns mentioned above. Or simply print out the template from the Nutrition Planner (resource list).
- 2. Start logging:
    - Duration: Keep your food diary for the next seven days.
    - Details: Write down every meal, snack and drink, including approximate quantities and times.
    - Feelings and situations: Note why you are eating (e.g. hunger, stress, boredom).
- 3. Document water intake:
    - Amount: Record the amount of water you drink each day.
- 4. Fill in a sample day:
    - Today: Either fill in the diary for today as accurately as possible. Or start first thing tomorrow morning, without putting it off for too long.
- 5. Get highlighters:

    - Get a pack of 5 different colored highlighters and mark the respective food groups in color for each day, each meal - using the method described above.
- 6. evaluation and awareness:
    - Evaluate your current eating habits using your diary, as explained above, and be aware of how much of each “color”, i.e. each food group, you consume daily. This can look like this:

Green = vegetable portions: rarely, moderately, frequently

Pink = snacks and sweets/sugary foods: rarely, moderately, frequently

Orange = “White” meat: rarely, moderately, often

Red = “Red” meat: rarely, moderately, often

Blue = high in carbohydrates: rarely, moderately, often

This is how you visualize what and how often you eat certain things.

Once you have completed these tasks, you will have a clear picture of your current eating habits and be ready to make targeted changes. Only by keeping honest and detailed records can you create the basis for your weight loss success. So, being precise pays off here!

Chapter 6

The Weight Loss Formula

Okay, so we've covered the preliminary groundwork, which may have been a bit unexpected for you but is crucial to success in terms of your motivation, goals, supporters and your current situation.

Now we come to the nitty-gritty: I present to you my weight loss formula. It consists of ten main components, plus an optional additional component. We will discuss each of these components, which I will call principles below, as briefly as possible, but as thoroughly as necessary. Let's get started!

Principle #1 - Eliminate High-Carb Foods

Nicole's tip

My nutritionist Nicole gave me the first tip: "Mr. Rudnik, reduce the carbohydrates in your diet." She explained to me that this was the key to sustainable weight loss. With her support, I began to change my diet and quickly noticed positive changes.

What are carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates are one of the main sources of energy in our diet. They come in different forms, which differ in their chemical structure and effects on the body.

- Simple sugars: These are the simplest carbohydrates and are digested quickly. Examples include glucose and fructose, which are found in fruit, sugar and sweets.
- Complex sugars: these consist of long chains of sugar molecules and are digested more slowly. Examples include starch, which is found in foods such as potatoes, bread, pasta and rice.
- Dietary fiber: although they are technically also carbohydrates, they are not digested and instead offer other health benefits such as promoting digestion.

In addition to the above, many processed foods and also sugars are high in carbohydrates. These foods provide quick energy but can lead to weight gain if consumed in excess.

What do carbohydrates do in the body?

When we eat carbohydrates, their digestion begins in the mouth. They are broken down into their simplest forms, mainly glucose, which is then absorbed into the blood. This process increases blood sugar levels. This is where insulin comes into play.

Insulin is a hormone secreted by the pancreas. It helps transport the glucose from the blood into the cells, where it is used as energy or stored as fat. When we eat more carbohydrates than our body needs, the excess is stored as fat.

Too much glucose in the blood can also lead to insulin resistance, in which the cells no longer respond effectively to insulin. This can lead to weight gain and, in the long term, to health problems such as type 2 diabetes.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Reducing carbohydrates in the diet is a proven method of weight loss, supported by numerous scientific studies and testimonials.

One significant study that proves this is the “Effect of Low-Fat vs Low-Carbohydrate Diet on 12-Month Weight Loss in Overweight Adults” study. Researchers found that a

low-carbohydrate diet promotes significantly more weight loss compared to a low-fat diet. Participants who followed a low-carbohydrate diet lost an average of 11.7 lbs compared to 5.7 lbs for those who followed a low-fat diet (source: The Nutrition Source: https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/carbohydrates/low-carbohydrate-diets/)

Another important study is the "DIRECT" study, which compared different diets. After two years, it was shown that the participants who followed a low-carbohydrate diet achieved greater weight loss and better weight maintenance than those who followed a low-fat diet (Source: BioMed Central: https://bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-023-02869-9)

In addition, a comprehensive meta-analysis showed that low-carb diets are not only effective for weight loss, but can also have positive effects on important health markers such as blood sugar levels and heart health (sources: https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/carbohydrates/low-carbohydrate-diets/ & (https://bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/ articles/10.1186/s12916-023-02869-9).

These scientific findings confirm that reducing carbohydrates is an effective and sustainable method of weight loss. The stable blood sugar levels and reduced cravings that come with a low-carbohydrate diet further contribute to long-term health benefits.

Here are some reasons why this works:

- Blood sugar stabilization: By reducing carbohydrate intake, blood sugar levels stabilize, resulting in fewer cravings.
- Ketosis: When eating a very low-carb diet, your body can enter a state of ketosis, in which it uses fat instead of glucose as its main source of energy. This promotes fat burning. To check whether you have reached this state of ketosis, you can buy so-called Ketostix in pharmacies or online.
- Long-term health: A low-carbohydrate diet can help to reduce insulin resistance and lower the risk of chronic diseases.

How I implemented it and what I noticed

I thought implementing a low-carbohydrate diet would be challenging, but it wasn't as difficult as I thought. It quickly became a habit for me.

- Breakfast: I replaced my sugary muesli with porridge, which is available in the supermarket as a ready-mix of crushed oats with dried fruits. Although oats also contain carbohydrates, they are high in dietary fiber and help you feel full for longer.

Porridge is also easy to make yourself, and even cheaper, by buying crushed oats and adding a frozen berry mixture, then pouring on hot water and letting it swell.

- Lunch: I avoided side dishes like potatoes or rice or reduced them significantly. Instead, I filled my plate with vegetables and at least one source of protein, more on that later.
- Pasta: I was a real pasta lover and liked spaghetti Bolognese, carbonara and co. too much. Now, when I felt like eating pasta, I chose "Zero Pasta", a pasta alternative made from konjac flour. I ate it with a little meat-free, ready-made tomato sauce from a jar, such as Napoli, Arrabiata or Olive Style, diluted with water. These konjac noodles took some getting used to at first, but after a while they tasted good too. They are a great alternative and help keep your carbohydrate intake low. You can find more information here: https://us.openfoodfacts.org/product/0850031465046/noodle-zero
- Test reader Christiane recommends edamame (soybean) pasta. She says it's particularly delicious. Add pesto and a bit of melted buffalo mozzarella on top and you're done. Thanks for the tip, Christiane!
- Bread: I avoided bread as much as possible in the morning and evening. The flour in bread, especially white flour, consists mainly of quickly digestible carbohydrates that cause blood sugar levels to rise rapidly and can thus promote food cravings. Maybe just once a week I would have a sandwich for breakfast from the bakery or eat two slices of bread with my grandma for dinner every other week. Otherwise, I didn't eat any bread.

These adjustments helped me to significantly reduce my daily carbohydrate intake (by about 60%) and keep my blood sugar levels stable.

Practical tips for reducing carbohydrates

Here are some practical tips to help you reduce your carbohydrate intake:

- Avoid foods: Avoid highly processed foods, which often contain high amounts of sugar and simple carbohydrates. These include white bread, sweets, soft drinks and many packaged snacks.
- Healthy alternatives: Replace carbohydrate-rich side dishes with healthier alternatives. Instead of rice, you can use cauliflower rice, and instead of traditional pasta, zucchini noodles (zoodles) or ones made from konjac flour or edamame are delicious options.
- Whole foods: Focus on whole, unprocessed foods such as vegetables, nuts, seeds and healthy fats. These not only help you lose weight, but also promote general health.

Common questions and misunderstandings

There are many misunderstandings and questions surrounding the topic of carbohydrates and how to reduce them. Here are some of them:

- “Are all carbohydrates bad?” No, not all carbohydrates are bad. It's about choosing the right types and amounts. High-fiber carbohydrates, such as vegetables and whole grains, are important for a healthy diet.
- “Am I not allowed to eat any carbohydrates at all?” There is no need to eliminate carbohydrates completely. It's more about reducing your intake and focusing on healthier sources, such as vegetables, nuts, and seeds.

Action element

Here are three small tasks to help you implement this:

- 1. Take a look at your evaluated food diary.
- 2. Eliminate all foods that are high in carbohydrates from your kitchen and from your diet, especially side dishes such as pasta, rice and potatoes. Also reduce your bread consumption.
- 3. Set a goal to reduce your current carbohydrate intake by at least 50%, and later gradually by 80%.

This step may seem drastic at first, but it is crucial to your success. Start small and gradually increase your carbohydrate reduction. You will see how quickly positive changes occur.

Principle #2 - Integrate Vegetables As The Main Component Of Your Diet.

Nicole's tip

Nicole's second tip was to eat lots of vegetables, especially green vegetables. Of course, I had often heard that vegetables are healthy. But I had never really tried it. And I didn't know that green vegetables are particularly valuable when it comes to losing weight. Nicole said that spinach, broccoli, kale and many other types contained exactly the substances that would help my body lose weight. “Eat as many green vegetables as you can. Eat until you're really full!” she encouraged me.

Why are vegetables so healthy?

Vegetables are a real miracle cure. They are full of vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. But what does that mean for you in concrete terms?

- Vitamins and minerals: These little helpers support your bodily functions. They strengthen your immune system, help with cell repair and make you feel full of energy.

- Dietary fiber: It promotes digestion and ensures a long-lasting feeling of satiety. This means you stay full longer and avoid food cravings.
- Few calories, lots of nutrients: Vegetables contain few calories but lots of nutrients. This is perfect for eating until you're full without taking in too many calories.

What do vegetables do in the body?

When you eat vegetables, a lot of good things happen in your body. Let's take a closer look:

- Dietary fiber promotes digestion: Dietary fiber acts like little brooms in your digestive tract. They help keep everything moving and prevent constipation. A healthy gut is crucial for your well-being and weight loss.
- Vitamins and minerals strengthen the immune system: Especially when losing weight, it is important to stay healthy. Vitamins like vitamin C and minerals like zinc support your immune system and help you fight off infections.
- Phytonutrients: These substances, found in vegetables, have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. This means they protect your cells from damage and support your metabolism.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Vegetables are not only healthy, but also a proven way to lose weight. A study by the Harvard School of Public Health shows that people who eat a lot of vegetables can lose weight more easily and maintain their weight. The participants in this study who consumed large amounts of vegetables every day lost an average of 6 pounds more than the control group. So this method really works! (Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/study)

How I implemented it and what I noticed

At the beginning, I used fresh vegetables for my evening meal every day, as Nicole had recommended. I made a stir-fry with fresh zucchini, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli, spring onions, often with mushrooms, after work. I was thrilled by the variety and colors. But after a while, I got tired of constantly chopping vegetables. Maybe you know the feeling: after a long day, you just want to eat something quick and healthy without a lot of effort.

That's why I switched to frozen vegetables. I had learned from a cooking show on TV that even top chefs sometimes use frozen vegetables. I talked to experts, including at the Green Fair in Magdeburg and elsewhere, to find out more. I learned that ready-mixes from the frozen food section are actually just as healthy because they are frozen immediately after harvesting. The immediate freezing process halts the natural decomposition process that occurs after harvesting, thus preserving vitamins and nutrients to a large extent.

What I noticed was that

after I had cut out carbohydrate-rich side dishes such as potatoes, rice or pasta and replaced them with vegetables, I realized that I could also get full from them. But instead of feeling too full, i.e. satiated, I felt just sufficiently full, but lighter. I no longer had that typical feeling of sluggishness or tiredness after eating, but noticed that I suddenly felt more energetic.

I also noticed a change in the bathroom. I didn't have to go as often and didn't eliminate as much. To put it more nicely, this meant that my digestion was now less strained because the vegetables seemed to be easier for me to digest than the heavy side dishes I ate before.

Note:

Of course, fresh vegetables, preferably organic, are the ultimate in flavor and variety. But it is also a matter of cost, requires a little effort in daily processing, and must always be stocked fresh. Frozen vegetables are easier to store, quicker to prepare, and, in line with the idea of this book, can be a convenient and almost equivalent alternative.

Test reader Christiane has another important comment about vegetables: you should never eat raw vegetables in the evening. Your stomach can't digest them anymore and they start to ferment in your stomach. There are people who develop alcoholic fatty liver disease just from that. This statement is confirmed by MD Britta Sonnenschein in this video: https://www.facebook.com/reel/956063089511687.

Practical tips for increasing your vegetable intake

How can you integrate more vegetables into your daily routine? Here are a few practical tips:

- Planning: Plan your meals in advance and include vegetables in each meal. This way, you can be sure that you always have enough vegetables on hand.
- Variety: Try different varieties to avoid getting bored. Each vegetable has its own benefits and flavors.
- Recipes: Look for simple and delicious recipes that include vegetables. There are so many great recipes that are quick and easy to prepare.
- Snacks: Prepare healthy vegetable snacks that you can eat in between meals. Carrot sticks, cucumber slices or bell pepper strips are perfect for those little hunger pangs.
- Smoothies: Add spinach or kale to your smoothies. You won't even notice the taste, but your body will thank you for it.

Frequently asked questions and misunderstandings

You probably still have questions or concerns. Here are some of the most common ones answered:

- “Are frozen vegetables really healthy?” Yes, it is true that frozen vegetables are healthy. A study by the University of California, Davis, conducted by Dr. Diane Barrett, showed that frozen vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh vegetables and in some cases even contain more nutrients. The study examined eight common vegetables and fruits and found that the nutritional value of

water-soluble vitamins such as vitamin C and riboflavin, as well as vitamin E and various minerals, is well preserved in frozen vegetables. You can find more details about the study here: https://fruitandvegetable.ucdavis.edu/files/217154.pdf

- "Can I also use canned vegetables?" Canned vegetables often contain additives and fewer nutrients. Frozen vegetables are the better choice.
- "Do I have to eat only green vegetables?" No, all vegetables are healthy. However, green vegetables are particularly rich in nutrients and contain many important substances that your body needs.

Action element

Now it's your turn! Here are some tasks to help you integrate vegetables into your daily routine naturally:

- 1. Go to your favorite supermarket, an organic food store or the weekly market in your city and take a look at the colorful variety of vegetables on offer.
- 2. Buy five different types of vegetables to your heart's content, e.g. zucchini, carrots, broccoli, tomatoes, eggplant. A little bit of spring onions and a few cloves of garlic will round off the flavor experience.
- Alternatively, you can also buy three ready-packaged, frozen vegetable mixes from the frozen food section of your supermarket (available in different-sized packages), e.g. stir-fry vegetables "Italian style", stir-fry vegetables "Asian style", etc., in conventional or organic quality.
- 3. prepare a delicious vegetable stir-fry with your main meals every day by chopping the vegetables (or just opening the bag) and, ideally, stir-frying or frying them in a pan (a saucepan also works) with a little oil (e.g. rapeseed oil).
-

(Also note the other principles of this weight loss formula to complete your vegetable meals and make them even tastier).

With an open mind, these steps will help you develop a taste for vegetables and naturally integrate them into your daily routine, while also noticing the positive effects on your

weight and health. You will see that vegetables are not only healthy, but also delicious and versatile. Be inspired by the many possibilities and enjoy the benefits of a vegetable-rich diet.

Principle #3 - Reduce Meat And Choose The Healthier

Nicole's tip

Nicole said to me, “Feel free to incorporate healthy ‘white’ meat (including fish) into your diet and avoid ‘red’ meat. White meat, such as chicken and turkey, has many advantages over red meat, such as beef and pork. It contains fewer saturated fats and calories, as well as important proteins, making it a healthier choice.”

Let's take a closer look...

What do you need to consider when it comes to meat? What are the differences?

- Nutrient content: white meat is high in protein, vitamins and minerals, but contains less saturated fat and cholesterol than red meat.
- Fat content: red meat has a higher proportion of saturated fats, which can raise cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease.
- Calories: White meat tends to be lower in calories, making it ideal for a calorie-conscious diet.
- Processing: Processed red meat (e.g. cold meats) often contains preservatives and additives that can be harmful to health.

What does meat do to the body?

- Cardiovascular system: Eating red meat can raise cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease. White meat has less saturated fat and helps protect the cardiovascular system.

- Weight: Red meat is higher in calories and fat, which can contribute to weight gain. White meat, with its lower calorie and fat content, aids weight control.
- Digestion: White meat is easier to digest and puts less of a strain on the digestive system than red meat.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

A 2012 study by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health showed that regular consumption of red meat is associated with an increased risk of weight gain and heart disease. These research results support the assumption that avoiding red meat and consuming white meat can be an effective method of weight loss. The study found that a daily intake of unprocessed red meat increases the risk of mortality by 13%, while processed red meat increases the risk by 20% (source: Harvard School of Public Health: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/red-meat-consumption-linked-to-increased-risk-of-total-cardiovascular-and-cancer-mortality/ & Harvard Gazette: https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/06/harvard-study-links-red-meat-consumption-with-early- death/)

How I implemented it and what I noticed

- Vegetable stir-fry with chicken or turkey: Two or three times a week, I added shredded chicken or turkey to my vegetable stir-fry. I bought the pre-packaged chicken or turkey from the supermarket and portioned it out in small freezer bags and froze it. This is an easy and delicious meal with a source of protein. I also discovered pre-seasoned chicken strips in a “Gyros Art” (gyro style) that I used from time to time. The turkey meat tastes a little finer and is not as fibrous as chicken. Both taste good and provide variety.
- Vegetable stir-fry with fish/mussels: I also combined the same vegetable stir-fry with fish, e.g. with simple, frozen Alaska pollock fillets or sometimes with pre-packaged portions of fine salmon, rich in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. This gave my vegetable meal a Mediterranean touch.

I also found mussels, which don't taste slimy or fishy at all but rather meaty, delicious with it. And I even found seafood mixes, which are also available pre-packaged, and which I've always enjoyed on a pizza frutti di mare, to be a good source of protein. That's how I discovered some healthy alternatives to red meat that I liked.

- Vegan restaurants: In (big) cities like Berlin, there are many restaurants that offer delicious vegan dishes. I tried a few. For example, I discovered a great Vietnamese vegan restaurant on Oranienburger Straße in Berlin. I had an organic tofu with chili, peanuts and a lemongrass note, glass noodles and soy sauce. All very pure, clear flavors that created an exciting blend in the mouth. This delicious dish is called "Bun Xao Xa Ot". Even as a non-vegan, I got a taste for it and would like to see more delicious food like this.

  In a talk show, I once heard the Green Party politician Katrin Göring-Eckardt say that the change towards an environmentally friendly and healthy vegan diet was only a question of supply. I now agree with that. If there were delicious plant-based dishes everywhere, in snack bars, canteens, fast food shops, smaller towns, etc., as there are in some Berlin restaurants, for example, many more people would be attracted to this type of diet and would not only do themselves good, but also animals and the environment.

- Health food stores: I also inspected the range of meat alternatives in health food stores and the health food store I trust, in the shopping center near my home. There I discovered meat substitutes that look like delicious little steaks, are fully seasoned and only need to be fried briefly. These are made from organic seitan or soy, e.g., and contain about 25% protein – that's a lot! They taste delicious and are a great, vegan alternative for former meat-eaters like me.

But I have also noticed that the less "real", animal meat I eat, the better I lose weight. I only enjoy red meat on very rare, special occasions, such as family gatherings.

Practical tips for increasing your consumption of healthy meat and fish

- Shopping lists: Plan your shopping in advance and buy chicken, turkey, fish, shellfish and vegan meat substitutes.
- Preparation methods: Experiment with different spices and marinades to make your white meat tasty.
- Meal planning: Plan your meals for the week in advance and include about three dishes (or more) with white meat/fish/vegan alternatives like tofu or seitan. This way, you can eat your stir-fry with five different types of healthy white meat in one week. And the remaining two days are simply "veggie" - that is, vegetarian. (We will discuss what else you can add in the next principle of this weight loss formula.)

Frequently asked questions and misunderstandings

- "Is red meat always bad?" Enjoyed in moderation and from a good source (ideally regional and organically farmed), red meat can be part of a balanced diet.
- "Can I still eat beef or pork if I want to lose weight?" Yes, but in moderation. The focus should be on reducing your intake, not giving up meat completely.

"Which types of fish are particularly healthy?" Salmon, mackerel and herring are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and very healthy. Make sure you buy sustainably caught fish. Check out the various seals of quality on the packaging. Here is an article on the subject: https://www.leafscore.com/grocery/most-important-eco-friendly-seafood-certifications/

Environmental, animal welfare and ethical aspects of meat consumption

- Animal farming: factory farming is harmful to the environment and animal welfare. Species-appropriate husbandry is a better alternative.
- CO2 from cattle farming: the production of red meat is associated with high CO2 emissions. Consuming less red meat helps protect the climate.
- Vegan trend: Many delicious vegan dishes are not only healthy, but also more animal- and environmentally friendly, which gives consumers a better conscience.

Action element

Before you read on, please complete the following tasks:

- 1. Meal planning: Plan your meals for the next week and include at least three dishes with white meat, fish or vegan alternatives. Use your favorite recipes or try out new ones to create variety.
- 2. Create a shopping list: Create a detailed shopping list for the planned meals. Be sure to buy a wide variety of the healthy meats presented here.
- 3. Be open to new things: Approach it with an open mind, try your way through all the white meat options mentioned. Don't categorically reject anything in advance because you think you might not like it. It's all a matter of habit.
- 4. Keep a diary: every day, write down what meals you ate and how you felt afterwards. Observe whether you feel different after eating white meat/fish/vegan than you do after eating red meat.
- 5. Try new recipes: Search for and try at least two new recipes with white meat, fish or vegan alternatives. Note down how you liked them and whether you would like to include them in your regular diet.
- 6. Gathering information: read an article or watch a short video about sustainable fishing or animal welfare to expand your knowledge about environmentally friendly meat consumption options.

Good luck with these tasks! Keep at it and watch the positive changes in your eating behavior and well-being. You can do it!

Principle #4 - Add Proteins As New Fillers

Nicole's tip

“Eat enough proteins with your vegetable stir-fry,” Nicole emphasized. ‘Proteins will really fill you up and are important for maintaining your muscles,’ she added. Since I liked cottage cheese, which is well suited, I should add a good half to three-quarters of a

piece of cottage cheese (from a 250-gram (8.8-ounce) package) to my vegetable meal. “What? Really that much?” I replied in amazement. This large amount totally baffled me. "Yes," Nicole said, "Don't skimp on proteins."

Let's delve deeper into the subject...

Proteins as a secret weapon

Proteins are not only an essential building block of your body, they are also a secret weapon in the fight against excess pounds. A simple yet effective way to stay full and satisfied is to add enough protein to your daily diet.

Imagine you are sitting in front of a steaming pan of vegetables. Now comes the crucial step: add a good portion of protein – this could be chicken breast, tofu or cottage cheese. These small changes can make a big difference.

What are the sources of protein?

Protein is everywhere. You just need to know where to look for it.

Animal sources of protein

- Meat (e.g. chicken, turkey, rabbit): These are not only high in protein, but also in essential amino acids that your body needs.
- Fish and seafood: An excellent choice as they also provide healthy omega-3 fatty acids.
- Eggs: versatile and easy to prepare. Try an omelette for breakfast to start the day with a protein-rich meal.
- Dairy products (e.g. yoghurt, Skyr/Alpro fermented soy product, quark (a fresh cheese), cottage cheese, Harz cheese, Quäse): ideal for snacks or as a supplement to main meals.

Vegetable sources of protein

- Legumes (e.g. beans, lentils, chickpeas): These are not only high in protein, but also provide dietary fiber that keeps you full for a long time.
- Nuts and seeds: Perfect for on the go, but watch the portion sizes as they are high in calories.
- Soy products (e.g. tofu, tempeh): Versatile and can be used in many dishes.
- Cereals (e.g. quinoa, amaranth): these also contain valuable vitamins and minerals.

It's best to eat less animal protein and more plant-based protein, as it is better for your health.

What do proteins do in the body?

Why are proteins so important? Let's take a closer look.

Increase satiety

Proteins are real satiety-boosters. They last longer than carbohydrates or fats because they are digested more slowly. So if you incorporate proteins into your meals, you'll stay full longer and avoid cravings. Have you ever noticed how a breakfast egg keeps you full for much longer than a bowl of cornflakes?

Muscle building and maintenance

When losing weight, many people not only lose fat but also valuable muscle mass. Proteins help to minimize this loss and maintain the muscles you already have. This is especially important because muscles help to boost your metabolism.

Boosting your metabolism

Did you know that your body burns more calories digesting protein than it does digesting fat or carbohydrates? This is called the thermic effect of food (dietary thermogenesis). Proteins can thus boost your metabolism and help you burn more calories, even when you're resting.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

The effectiveness of a high-protein diet for weight loss is well documented and proven by several scientific studies. Here is an important study that shows the positive effects of proteins when losing weight:

Study by Layman et al.:

This study showed that a higher protein intake during a diet leads to a significantly higher loss of body fat and better maintenance of muscle mass. Participants who consumed more protein lost more weight and retained more muscle mass than those who followed a high-carbohydrate diet. The results suggest that proteins not only increase satiety, but can also boost metabolism and increase energy expenditure. (Source: BioMed Central: https://nutritionandmetabolism.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1743-7075-3-44)

This study proves that a high-protein diet can be an effective way to lose weight, as it not only increases satiety and minimizes muscle loss, but also boosts your metabolism. Increasing your protein intake can help you lose weight in a healthier and more sustainable way.

How I implemented it and what I noticed

How can you do this in practice? Here are a few of my tried and tested methods:

- Cottage cheese with stir-fried vegetables: This combination not only provides protein but also flavor. Simply crumble the cheese over the warm vegetables and let it melt a little in the hot pan – delicious!
- White meat/fish/seafood with stir-fried vegetables: these protein sources are light yet filling. Perfect for a light dinner.
- Eggs with cottage cheese: I also made scrambled eggs from time to time, which already contain protein due to the egg white, and added chopped cottage cheese to them and let it melt a little, and refined it with a little salt and chili powder. You can also enhance it with halved cherry tomatoes, which you let melt with it. I love

this scrambled egg dish. But it is also a very filling dish due to the double source of protein. I noticed that it was too filling for me and I was fuller than I needed to be afterwards. Especially in the evening, a few hours before going to bed, it often weighed too heavily on my stomach.

- Quark: I also ate quark from time to time. I find it too dry on its own. It was often too filling/rich for me. So I didn't become a fan of it – but maybe you will? It can be easily enhanced with a little cocoa powder or a few fruits, such as blueberries or raspberries. Incidentally, test reader Christiane recommends cottage cheese as a not-so-boring alternative.
- Tuna: I'm a fish fan anyway and like it in all types and forms. So I sometimes just got a can of tuna as a quick, lazy supper. To keep my calorie intake in check, I always chose the "tuna fillets in their own juice" option. They contain only 1 g fat, 0 g carbohydrates (very good!) and 19.5 g protein per 100 g. More information here: https://us.openfoodfacts.org/product/0078742082752/chunk-light-tuna-in-water-great-value
- Protein bread: In the beginning, when I hadn't completely eliminated bread from my diet, I tried the healthier alternative of protein bread two or three times. I found the taste took some getting used to and I noticed the filling effect. It didn't become my favorite, but it was worth a try. At some point, I was eating almost no bread at all. You can find an example of protein bread here: https://us.openfoodfacts.org/product/4061463092489/protein-bread-adi

Practical tips for increasing your protein intake

How can you incorporate more protein into your diet? Here are some simple tips:

Meal planning

Plan your meals in advance and make sure that each meal contains at least one, or even two or more, sources of protein. For example, you could have an egg for breakfast, grilled chicken and feta cheese for lunch, and a portion of tofu and veggies for dinner.

Protein-rich snacks

Always have protein-rich snacks on hand, such as Greek yogurt, a handful of almonds, or protein bars. These can prevent cravings and keep you full between meals.

Nutritional supplements?

Protein shakes or powders are available as nutritional supplements. Since I was already somewhat aware of the importance of proteins before the nutrition counseling, I toyed with the idea of simply getting protein powder and taking it as a daily shake to easily meet my protein needs.

I asked Nicole what she thought about it. She said I should rather resort to natural sources of protein, as we have discussed them here above. She only considers supplementation with such shakes to be useful if you do really intense fitness training, like athletes or bodybuilders do. And I didn't do that.

To round off this question again... My research showed that protein shakes or powders can be a practical addition, especially if you are in a hurry or want to increase your protein intake. But you should always make sure to choose high-quality products and not use them as a substitute for natural protein sources. Natural protein sources should form the basis.

Frequently asked questions and misunderstandings

- "Do proteins make you fat?" No, proteins don't make you fat. On the contrary, they can help you lose weight by increasing satiety and boosting your metabolism. However, it depends on your overall calorie intake, so be careful not to eat too much, even if it's healthy proteins.
- "Can I take in too much protein?" Yes, it is possible to consume too much protein. The approximate daily requirement for adults is around 0.5 to 0.75 grams per pound of body weight. This means that a person weighing 150 lbs needs about 75 to 112.5 grams of protein per day. Athletes or people with special nutritional needs may have a higher requirement. However, too much protein can put a strain on

the kidneys and lead to other health problems. It is therefore important to get the amount right.

- "Are plant-based proteins just as good as animal-based proteins?" Yes, plant-based proteins are just as good as animal-based proteins. They just have a slightly different amino acid composition. However, a balanced mix from different plant sources can provide you with all the essential amino acids your body needs. What's more, plant-based proteins are often lower in fat and higher in fiber.

Action element

Here are some tips for successfully incorporating it into your diet:

- 1. Add a protein source(s): Choose at least one or more protein sources from the list above for each of your vegetable meals and add them to your meal.
- 2. Keep a diary: Log your protein intake for a week. Note which protein sources you have used and how much of each you have eaten (see nutritional information on the back, as well as using the rule of three[3] to calculate the amount consumed). This will help you get a feel for how much protein you actually consume.
- 3. Try out a recipe: Prepare a high-protein recipe, for example stir-fried vegetables with cottage cheese or a quinoa salad with chickpeas. Note down your experiences and how your satiety and energy levels have changed.
- 4. Reflection: Consider how your satiety and energy levels have changed. Do you feel full for longer? Do you have fewer cravings?

If you implement these points, you will notice the satiating effect of proteins. Have fun experimenting!

On my own behalf

If this book provides you with useful knowledge and motivates you for your own weight loss project, please click here and leave a review on Amazon. Any positive feedback, no matter how short, is helpful.

[3] The rule of three is a mathematical procedure for solving simple proportion problems.

> If this book does not meet your expectations, please send me a message to the email address bjoern.rudnik@gmail.com and you will get your money back.

Principle #5 - Add (Healthy) Fat

Introduction

I still remember the day well when I was standing in the bookshop at the main train station and a book caught my eye that was to change my life. “Low Carb High Fat” – LCHF. It sounded so contradictory to everything I had learned about nutrition so far. Fat doesn't make you fat? Unbelievable! But I was curious, so I started researching other books about LCHF online. Finally, I ordered “Mein Low-Carb High-Fat Kochbuch” (My Low-Carb High-Fat Cookbook) by Anne Paschmann. The subtitle “How I got slim with a lot of fat” sounded promising and made me curious about more.

While reading this book, I remembered my grandmother's words. “Boy, eat enough good butter! The body needs a little fat!” This old wisdom now took on a new meaning for me. So I started to look into the LCHF approach in depth. In her book, Anne Paschmann tells the amazing story of the very overweight Swede Sten Sture Skaldeman, who discovered this method, so to speak, and achieved incredible success with it.

He was fat and very ill, weighing over 330 lbs (at 5 feet 9 inches tall). The doctors gave him only a few months to live. He gave up because losing weight didn't work, and wanted to eat himself to death. He ate many fatty things that he liked. And instead of gaining weight, he actually lost weight! Today, at 176 lbs and with perfect blood values, he is enjoying his retirement. You can find his full story and more about the LCHF approach here (translate it with Google translate):
https://lchf-deutschland.de/sten-sture-skaldeman-mein-lchf-2/

Nicole's tip

With this rudimentary knowledge about *healthy* fats, I went to my nutritionist, Nicole. Her confirmation gave me confidence: “Yes, healthy fats are important,” she said. “But

don't overdo it. If you add canola oil to your stir-fry, use about three tablespoons. That's enough. Keep an eye on the calories in the oil." Her words sounded sensible. It's not about consuming fat in excess, but about consuming the right fats in the right quantities.

What types of fat are there?

The world of fats is diverse, and not all fats are the same. Here is an overview:

- Saturated fats: These are found in butter, cheese and meat. For a long time, they were considered unhealthy, but when enjoyed in moderation, they have their place in a healthy diet.
- Monounsaturated fats: These fats, found in olive oil, avocado and nuts, are true health wonders. They support the heart and circulatory system and are easy to digest.
- Polyunsaturated fats: omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids belong to this group. They are found in oily fish, chia seeds and flax seeds and have an anti-inflammatory effect.
- Trans fats: These artificially hardened fats are found in many processed foods, e.g. baked goods (biscuits, cakes, tarts, pastries, croissants), fried foods (chips, doughnuts), ready meals such as frozen pizza, margarine and baking fats, as well as snacks such as potato crisps. Avoid them whenever possible, as they increase the risk of heart disease.

To put it simply, not all fats are bad. It depends on which ones you choose and how much you eat.

What do fats do in the body?

Fats are not only energy suppliers, they also fulfill many important functions in the body:

- Energy supply: Fats provide a slow and constant source of energy that keeps you full for a long time → *they satisfy your appetite!*

- Cell structure and hormone production: Fats are essential for building cell membranes and producing hormones.
- Healthy skin, hair and nails: They promote a healthy appearance and support regeneration.
- Fat-soluble vitamins: Vitamins A, D, E and K can only be absorbed by the body in combination with fat. Without enough fat in your diet, these important nutrients go unused.

Remember: Your body needs fat to function optimally. It is not the enemy, but an important ally.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

The LCHF (Low Carb High Fat) approach has been proven to be an effective method for weight loss. Here's why:

- Less Carbohydrate, More Fat: By reducing carbohydrates, you force your body to use fat as its main source of energy. This leads to *more efficient fat burning.*
- Scientific background: Studies show that a high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet leads to stable blood sugar levels and lower insulin output. Both support weight loss.
- Testimonials: Many people, including myself, have lost significant weight through LCHF and are successfully maintaining their weight.

Here are two specific studies on this...

Study 1: PMC9695571

This study examined the long-term effects of a low-carb, high-fat (LCHF) diet in overweight adults. The participants followed an LCHF diet for 12 months and showed significant improvements in weight loss and insulin sensitivity. The study found that a low-carbohydrate diet combined with a high-fat intake leads to more effective and sustainable weight loss than traditional low-fat diets. However, the researchers emphasized the need to monitor high saturated fat consumption. (Source: National Library of Medicine: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9695571/)

Study 2: Nutrition Journal

This cross-sectional study examined the dietary patterns of 100 people who follow an LCHF diet. The results showed that the majority of energy intake came from fats (72%), with carbohydrate intake being very low (8.7%) and protein intake moderate (16.9%). The participants did not show any nutrient deficiencies, although intake of dietary fiber and certain micronutrients was low. The study confirmed that a LCHF diet can be sustainably implemented in practice, but emphasized the need for further research into the long-term effects on cardiovascular health. (Source: BioMed Central: https://nutritionj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12937-023-00847-8)

How I implemented it and what I noticed

Now you may be wondering how you can incorporate all these healthy fats into your diet. Here are some of my favorite discoveries:

- Bulletproof Coffee: This coffee is made with butter and MCT oil (or coconut oil). It not only gives me an energy boost in the morning, but also keeps me full for a long time. Add a spoonful of delicious pasture butter, for example from the cows on the green Irish meadows. At first, I found this combination of coffee and fat unusual. But I quickly got used to it.
- Coconut oil in meals: Since I had already bought coconut oil, I also tried it in my dishes. It gives the food a great, exotic touch.
- Chia seeds: These little seeds are real nutrient bombs and rich in omega-3 fatty acids. I like to sprinkle them over my porridge or my ready-made stir-fried vegetables.
- Rapeseed (kernel) oil: A versatile oil that is perfect for salads and cooking. It has a favorable ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids. I often use the inexpensive rapeseed oil. If my budget allows, I reach for the even higher-quality rapeseed kernel oil. I love the taste of both oils and I only use them for frying or to drizzle over my vegetable dishes afterwards.

- Linseed oil: This is also great for drizzling over ready meals such as stir-fried vegetables or scrambled eggs. Its taste is a bit tart and bitter. This is how it differs noticeably from rapeseed oil.
- Avocado: One of my favorite fruits! It has a slightly soapy taste that I got used to. Whether in a salad, in my vegetable stir-fries or just by itself, pure. Avocado is rich in healthy fats and versatile.
- Salmon and herring fillets: I love salmon and occasionally treated myself to a salmon bagel at the train station bakery. (Yes, I allowed myself a roll here for a change). Also as frozen salmon, portion-wise packed, with vegetables for lunch. In the evening, I sometimes got plastic-wrapped “Noble Matjes Fillets Nordic Style” and ate them just like that.
- Scrambled eggs with bacon: a classic breakfast that gives me energy for the day and is a great combination of protein and fat – a double hit of satiety. A little flaxseed oil on top and it's ready!
- I realized that healthy fat really does make me feel full and also has a positive effect on my weight.

Practical tips for increasing your intake of healthy fats

It's not that difficult to incorporate more healthy fats into your diet. Here are some simple tips:

- Snacks: Keep nuts and seeds handy. They are (in small quantities) perfect snacks for in between meals.
- Salads: Use high-quality oils such as olive oil or canola seed oil for your salad dressings.
- Cooking: Cook with coconut oil or butter instead of margarine or vegetable fats.
- Avocado: Incorporate avocado into your meals – whether in a salad, on a (whole grain) sandwich, or as guacamole.
- Meal prep: Plan your meals in advance and make sure that they always contain a good source of healthy fats.

These small changes can make a big difference and help you enjoy the benefits of a high-fat diet.

Frequently asked questions and misunderstandings

Many people have doubts and questions when it comes to incorporating more fat into their diet. Here are some of the most common misunderstandings and the truth behind them:

- “Don't fats make you fat?” – No, not necessarily. It depends on the type of fat and the total number of calories. Healthy fats can even help you lose weight because they keep you feeling fuller for longer.
- “How much fat is too much?” – Balance is key. Listen to your body and find the right amount for you.
- “Are all saturated fats bad?” – No, that's a myth. Saturated fats have their place in a balanced diet, especially if they come from natural sources.
- “Should I buy low-fat products or rather the full-fat versions?” – The full-fat versions of quark, yoghurt, cheese and the like are often the better choice. They are more natural and contain less sugar and additives.

Action element

Finally, here is a little challenge for you:

- 1. Task: Incorporate at least one additional source of healthy fats into your meals every day.
- 2. Recipe suggestions: Try out new recipes that are rich in healthy fats. For example, an avocado salad, bulletproof coffee or chia pudding.
- 3. Keep a diary: Note how you feel after a week of increased fat intake. Pay attention to changes in your energy level, satiety and general well-being.
- 4. Reflection: Do you notice any positive changes? Keep track of them and think about how you can integrate these new habits into your daily routine in the long term.

I hope this section has shown you how important and beneficial healthy fats are for your diet. They can help you lose weight and feel healthy and energized at the same time. Good luck on your journey!

Principle #6 - Avoid Sugar

Introduction

Sometimes it's the small changes that make the biggest difference. One of the most important lessons I've learned was to minimize my sugar intake. Maybe you're thinking, "Oh no, I can't give up sweets completely!" But don't worry, you don't have to. It's about being more conscious of sugar and gradually reducing it.

Nicole's tip

I knew that if I wanted to lose weight, I couldn't stuff myself with bars of chocolate or eat a generous amount of Nutella for breakfast every day. However, I still didn't know how much fruit I could eat daily without consuming too much fructose. Nicole's answer was simple and extremely practical: "You can eat as much fruit per day as fits into two (normal-sized) hands (like yours) if you hold them close together and form them into a kind of bowl." This amount provides me with important nutrients and vitamins, as they are also contained in fruit, without me having to worry about the fructose, Nicole continued.

But let's start at the beginning with this sweet topic...

What types of sugar are there?

When we talk about sugar, most of us think of white table sugar. But sugar comes in many forms and names. Here is an overview:

Natural sugars:

- Fruit sugar (fructose): This sugar is found in fruit. Although fruit sugar is more natural, it doesn't mean you should eat unlimited amounts of fruit.
- Lactose: In dairy products such as milk and yogurt. Lactose provides energy and aids in the absorption of calcium.

Added sugars:

- Table sugar (sucrose): Extracted from sugar cane or sugar beets. This sugar is the best known and most consumed.
- Glucose syrup: often found in processed foods. It provides sweetness and a pleasant texture.
- High-fructose corn syrup: mainly found in soft drinks and confectionery. This syrup has a high fructose content and is particularly harmful in large quantities.

Hidden sugars:

- In processed foods: sauces, dressings, ready meals, cold meats – all these products may contain sugar without us suspecting it.
- In drinks: sweetened juices, energy drinks and even some “healthy” smoothies are often sugar bombs.

Sweeteners and sugar substitutes:

- Artificial sweeteners: aspartame, saccharin and sucralose are widely used. They have no calories, but there is debate about their health effects.
- Sugar alcohols: xylitol, erythritol and sorbitol are often found in “sugar-free” products. They have fewer calories than sugar, but in large quantities can have a laxative effect.
- Natural alternatives: stevia, agave nectar and maple syrup offer natural sweetness. But here too, the rule is: enjoy in moderation.

What does sugar do in the body?

Sugar can be like a rollercoaster ride. In the short term, it gives you an energy boost because your blood sugar level rises quickly. That sounds good at first, doesn't it? But then it drops just as quickly. This rapid drop leaves you tired and hungry. Your body is crying out for more sugar, and you reach for the nearest sweet treat. A vicious circle begins.

Long-term effects:

- Weight gain: Sugar provides empty calories. That is, it has a lot of calories but no nutrients. These excess calories are stored as fat.
- Insulin resistance: Regular high sugar consumption can lead to insulin resistance, which is a precursor to type 2 diabetes.
- Risk of diabetes and heart disease: Sugar puts a strain on the cardiovascular system and increases the risk of many diseases.

Influence on the hormonal system:

Sugar also affects your hormones, especially insulin, which regulates blood sugar levels. High sugar consumption can disrupt the hormonal system, negatively affecting your appetite and metabolism.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Numerous studies and scientific findings prove that reducing sugar is a sustainable method of losing weight. A systematic review and meta-analysis published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) showed that a reduction in sugar intake leads to significant weight loss. This analysis included several randomized controlled trials and cohort studies that examined the effects of sugar on body weight. (Source: British Medical Journal: https://www.bmj.com/content/346/bmj.e7492)

Another study, published in Clinical Diabetes, showed that replacing sugar-sweetened beverages with low-calorie sweeteners (LCSs) led to significant weight loss. In particular, overweight and obese adults lost more weight with these drinks than with water. (Source: Diabetes Journals:

https://diabetesjournals.org/clinical/article/39/1/45/32080/Practical-Strategies-to-Help-Reduce-Added-Sugars)

How I implemented it and what I noticed

Here are some specific changes I made:

- Stevia instead of sweetener in coffee: Stevia is a natural alternative with no calories. It is much sweeter than sugar, so you only need a small amount.
- Unsweetened porridge instead of sweet muesli: Porridge is high in fiber and keeps you fuller longer. I found a great organic porridge[4] in my supermarket that doesn't need any added sugar and is very affordable. You can refine such instant porridge with berries and nuts to make it even tastier. I now know the porridge selection in all my favorite supermarkets and discount stores.
- No more sweetened drinks: Instead, I drink tap water, unsweetened teas or infused water, e.g. with lemon, cucumber or ginger slices.
- No more cold meats/sausage: Many types of cold meats contain hidden sugar and unhealthy additives. I prefer to eat fresh, unprocessed foods.
- Only a little fruit: I eat fruit very carefully to keep my fructose intake moderate. I particularly like berries (blueberries, raspberries) because they contain less sugar. I only eat an apple occasionally. I'm certainly stricter with fruit than I need to be. I have a little too much respect for fructose.

At first, I couldn't imagine such a strict sugar reduction. Maybe in the first week I had the thought from time to time, "Oh, now a piece of chocolate, that would be it..." But these little withdrawal symptoms quickly ended. Now that I was really full from my stir-fried vegetables with proteins and fat, my body quickly became satisfied and no longer asked for sugar.

Practical tips for reducing your sugar intake

These tips will help you to reduce your sugar intake:

[4] Organic Farm Organic Porridge -with dried berries- 400 g. Not available in the U.S.

- Read labels: Take a close look at what's in the food you eat and drink. Sugar is often hidden behind different names such as dextrose, maltose or syrup.
- "Sugar-free" products should be scrutinized: products that are advertised as "sugar-free" often contain artificial sweeteners, which can also be problematic. Examples include many energy drinks or Diet Coke.
- Cook for yourself: If you cook for yourself, you can control the ingredients. You know exactly what is in your food.
- Find alternatives: Opt for healthy snacks such as nuts, seeds or vegetables. There are also many sugar-free products that you can try.
- Step-by-step reduction: Set yourself realistic goals. Reduce your sugar intake gradually to avoid withdrawal symptoms.
- Conscious consumption: Be aware of when and why you reach for sugar. Often it is emotional reasons or habits that tempt you.

Frequently asked questions and misunderstandings

There are many questions and misunderstandings surrounding the topic of sugar. Here are some of them:

- "Is fructose bad too?" Fructose is a natural sugar, but it should also be consumed in moderation. Fruit provides many valuable nutrients, but it is important to control the amount, as discussed earlier.
- "Can I never eat sweets again?" No, you don't have to give up sweets completely. It's about moderation and finding healthy alternatives. Dark chocolate, fruit or homemade snacks can be good choices.
- "How do I deal with cravings?" Cravings can be challenging. Try to distract yourself, drink a glass of water or have a small, healthy snack such as nuts or a piece of vegetable.
- "Is honey a healthy alternative?" Honey is a natural source of sweetness, but it also contains sugar. Enjoyed in moderation, it can be a good alternative, but again, don't overdo it. Two healthy, sweetening alternatives to honey are:

    - Maple syrup: A natural sweetener that contains many antioxidants. Maple syrup also has a lower glycemic index than sugar.
    - Date syrup: Another natural sweetener, high in dietary fiber and nutrients such as potassium and magnesium. Date syrup has a caramel flavor and is good for baked goods and desserts.
- “Can I always trust the ‘sugar-free’ label?” Just because a product is labeled as “sugar-free,” it doesn't always mean it's healthy. These products often contain artificial sweeteners, which can also pose health risks. It's important to read the ingredients list carefully and to be critical.

Here is a list of sugar substitutes (both artificial sweeteners and sugar alcohols) that can potentially be harmful to your health:

Artificial sweeteners:

1. Aspartame

2. Saccharin

3. Sucralose

4. Acesulfame potassium (Acesulfame K)

5. Neotame

6. Advantam

Sugar alcohols:

1. Xylitol

2. Sorbitol

3. Erythritol

4. Mannitol

5. Maltitol

6. Isomalt

7. Lactitol

These sweeteners and sugar alcohols may pose various health risks, especially when consumed to excess. It is advisable to moderate your intake of these substances and to be aware of possible side effects.

Action element

Before you move on in the weight loss formula, complete the following tasks:

- 1. Sugar inventory: Go to your kitchen and write down all foods that contain sugar or sugar substitutes. Look carefully at the ingredient lists.
- 2. A week without added sugar: Plan a week in which you consciously avoid all foods with added sugars and sugar substitutes. Make a note of the alternatives you have found.
- 3. Change your drinking habits: Replace all sweetened drinks with water, unsweetened tea or infused water (see above for examples).
- 4. Label study: Practice reading food labels and identifying hidden sugars. Use the above list of the most common terms for sugar and sugar substitutes and see which ones you find on labels.
- 5. Reflection: At the end of the week, note how you felt, what challenges you faced, and what positive changes you noticed.
- 6: Elimination: After this sugar-free week, opt for the radical solution and eliminate sugar or sugar substitutes from your household and diet. This will help you avoid being tempted again.

Drastically reducing sugar, or even cutting it out completely, is an important step on the road to a healthier life and sustainable weight loss. You'll see that you can get by on much less sweetness. Yes, even completely without sugar.

Good luck with this journey of discovery!

Principle #7 - Drink Lots Of Water

Introduction

Water is life. This simple truth has enormous significance, especially when it comes to losing weight. Yet many of us underestimate the power of a simple glass of water. The effect of water on the body is enormous. If you doubt how water can help you lose weight, then let's unlock the secret of this vital element.

Nicole's tip

“Drink a lot! Especially lots of water...”, Nicole gave me as a piece of advice. “At your weight, you should drink at least three liters (101 fl oz) a day.” “Wow, three liters..??”, I thought. ”I can barely manage half that! How am I supposed to manage that?” I replied. She answered that drinking a lot of water is a matter of training and pure habit. “And don't listen to your urologist, he will tell you something different”, she added.

Let's reveal the secret of water consumption for successful weight loss...

Effect of water in the body

Why is water so important? Water helps flush harmful substances out of the body. This is not a myth, but a scientifically proven fact. It helps the kidneys do their job efficiently. Imagine your body is a machine. Water is the oil that keeps that machine running smoothly. Without adequate hydration, toxins can build up, affecting your health and well-being.

Water is essential for hydration. Every cellular process in your body depends on water. When you drink enough water, you promote blood circulation, digestion and temperature regulation. And the best part? It has zero calories. So, every time you reach

for a glass of water, you give your body exactly what it needs without taking in any extra calories.

How much water should I drink?

The recommended amount of water varies from person to person. A good rule of thumb is about 2.5 to 3 liters per day (84.5 to 101.4 fl oz). Of course, it also depends on your level of activity, the climate in which you live, and your individual state of health. Nicole presented me with this more exact formula:

> You should drink about 0.5 fl oz of water per pound of body weight per day. At the time, I weighed about 220 pounds, so that came to a whopping 110 fl oz, or 3 liters, per day.

It is important to know that if you have been drinking less, you don't have to reach this amount immediately. Gradually increasing your consumption is the better way to go. Your body will get used to it and you will soon notice how you feel better when you drink more.

Tap water vs. mineral water

Now you may be wondering which water is best. Can I drink tap water without hesitation? The answer is, in most cases, yes. Tap water is strictly controlled in many countries and is mostly safe to drink – especially here in Germany.

Here is a small comparison between mineral and tap water:

- Quality and Safety: Tap water is often just as safe as bottled water, if not safer. It is regularly tested and must meet strict requirements.
- Cost Comparison: Tap water is significantly cheaper than bottled water. This is a clear advantage if you are trying to save money.
- Environmental Impact: Tap water is more environmentally friendly because it does not require plastic bottles.

- Mineral content: Bottled water often contains added minerals that can be beneficial for your body. However, there are many ways to add flavor and nutrients to your tap water, such as infused water, as briefly mentioned in Principle 6 “Avoid sugar”.
- Is it safe to drink tap water?: Tap water is safe to drink in most areas in Germany. But this can be different in other countries. Find out about the water quality in your area and use filters if necessary.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Why does drinking water help you lose weight? That's a good question that many people ask themselves. Water supports the metabolism and helps to cleanse the body. Studies show that adequate hydration can boost your metabolism by up to 30%. This means that your body burns more calories when it is well hydrated. (Source: Oxford Academic: https://academic.oup.com/jcem/article/88/12/6015/2661518)

Another study found that drinking 17 fl oz of water before meals for a period of eight weeks led to significant weight loss. (Source: also Oxford Academic: https://academic.oup.com/jcem/article/88/12/6015/2661518)

Water can also reduce the feeling of hunger. We often mistake thirst for hunger and reach for snacks when we actually just need a glass of water. A simple trick: drink a glass of water before each meal. You will eat less and feel full faster.

How I implemented it and what I noticed

I used an app to log my water intake. The reminders to drink water that the app provided were also very helpful. At first, it was unusual to drink so much water. But over time it became a habit. For on the go, I got a 0.75 liter (26 fl oz) water bottle that fits perfectly in my shoulder bag, which I usually have with me. So, whether at home, in the office or on the road, I was always well supplied with water.

Later, I got a 1-liter (33.8 fl oz) carafe from a large Swedish furniture store for my desk at home. This carafe made it much easier to keep track of how much I drank than with the app, where I had to track each glass individually. The carafe not only reminds me to drink regularly, but I also know when I drink three of them in one day that I have reached my target.

At first, I added (multi-)vitamin tablets to my tap water. I thought that a little extra vitamins couldn't hurt. However, Nicole advised against it, saying that it was better to avoid them because of the sweeteners they contain and the risk of vitamin overdose. I found the following study that supports Nicole's statement.

According to a study by the National Institute of Health, dietary supplements, including vitamin pills, can be useful for treating specific nutrient deficiencies. However, researchers emphasize that a balanced diet remains the best source of vitamins and minerals and that supplements are not necessary if you are already eating a balanced diet. (source: The Nutrition Source: https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-drinks/drinks-to-consume-in-moderation/alcohol-full-story/)

So I quickly stopped taking the vitamin pills. Instead, I tried unsweetened tea and infused water (or simply flavored water) – flavoring tap water with fruits, vegetables, or herbs without any sugar.

I found both tea and infused water to be pleasant, as it added variety and flavor. My favorite "infusions" are cucumber and ginger. But there are many other ways to spice up water in a healthy way.

By drinking regularly, I noticed that I felt less hungry. I often reached for a glass of water instead of snacks. My metabolism seemed to improve and I felt more energetic. I also get headaches less quickly when I sit in front of the laptop for a long time. If I happen to drink less, I immediately feel an urgent craving for water.

I have made it a habit to always have my freshly filled 1-liter carafe of water on the table at breakfast time, next to my pot of coffee.

I was surprised at how easy it was to increase my water consumption in the end – just a little more each day – and what a positive effect it had on my body.

Practical tips for increasing water consumption

- Infused water recipes: Add fruit and herbs to your water to make it taste better. Lemons, mint, cucumber, berries and even ginger are all great options.
- Drinking rituals: Schedule regular drinking breaks. For example, a glass of water every hour.
- Reminders: Set reminders on your phone to remind you to drink or download an app for it, search term, e.g. “water (drink) reminder”.

Common questions and misunderstandings

- Controversial opinions from experts: My urologist, for example, said that 3 liters (101 fl oz) per day is too much. 2 liters (68 fl oz) maximum, otherwise I will flush too many minerals out of my body. Other urologists, on the other hand, recommend high water consumption because it supports kidney function and prevents kidney stones.
- Addressing concerns: Don't worry about drinking too much water. As long as you're not drinking extreme amounts, 3 liters (101 fl oz) a day is safe.
- Coffee and other drinks: Do they count towards your daily water intake? Yes, but they shouldn't be your main source. Coffee and tea can have a diuretic effect, which means that they flush more water out of your body than they provide. In the case of teas, these are especially green, black and peppermint teas. So consume them with caution and compensate for any water loss.
- “How am I supposed to drink that much? I'll never make it!” It's a matter of training and habit. Start with small steps. Drink a little more each day until you reach your goal. Your body will get used to it and soon it will feel natural.

Action element

Here are some tasks to help you achieve your drinking goal:

- 1. Calculate the amount of water: Determine the recommended amount of water for your weight using the formula above (0.5 fl oz per lb per day)
- 2. Install the app: Download a water-drinking app and set up reminders.
- 3. Stock up on water: Place a 1-liter (1.75 pint) carafe on your desk and fill a water bottle for when you're on the go.
- 4. Try infused water: Prepare a carafe of infused water with one of the ingredients of your choice. Feel free to experiment!
- 5. Keep a drinking diary: Log your water consumption for a week and note any changes in your well-being.

Drinking water sounds simple, but it is a powerful tool in your weight loss process. It supports your body in many ways and can help you to lose weight effectively and sustainably. Take the time to get used to it, and you will soon notice the positive changes. Hang in there, it's worth it!

Principle #8 - Cut Out Alcohol

Introduction

Alcohol is often a staple of social events and a way to unwind after a long day. But if you want to lose weight, it's important to understand how alcohol can hinder your progress. I'll show you why it's worth cutting out alcohol and how you can successfully implement this step.

Nicole's tip

Another important tip from Nicole was, “Drastically reduce your alcohol consumption. It's best to avoid it completely.” At first I thought, oh man, what else am I going to have to give up..? I don't drink much, but I do have a beer or two after work or a glass or two of wine. Is that no longer an option? “Alcohol hinders your weight loss process,” Nicole continued matter-of-factly. “And what about non-alcoholic beer?” I asked. “It may not contain alcohol, but it still has calories,” she replied.

Let's get to the bottom of the alcohol dilemma...

Why is alcohol a hindrance to losing weight?

Alcohol contains many empty calories, that is, calories without significant nutrients. One gram of alcohol has about 7 calories, almost as much as fat. These calories add up quickly, especially if you drink regularly. A glass of wine here, a cocktail there, and you've already consumed extra calories without really realizing it.

But it's not just about the calories. Alcohol slows down your metabolism and impairs fat burning. Your body prioritizes the breakdown of alcohol, which means that fat burning pauses. Imagine your body is an engine that is constantly working. When you drink alcohol, the engine has to burn the alcohol first before it can get back to burning fat.

What's more, alcohol can increase your appetite. Many of us know the feeling: after a few drinks, we get ravenous and reach for unhealthy snacks or order another portion of chips with ketchup or mayo at the restaurant late at night. This combination of extra calories and a slower metabolism makes it difficult to lose weight.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Here is an overview of the study situation:

A systematic review of the research has shown that alcohol consumption can lead to weight gain. An analysis of several studies showed that people who drink alcohol regularly tend to gain more weight than non-drinkers (Source: Oxford Academic: https://academic.oup.com/nutritionreviews/article/69/8/419/1827829)

Another study found that drinking alcohol leads to an increase in the number of calories burned each day, without reducing the calorie intake from other food sources. (Source: The Nutrition Source: https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-drinks/drinks-to-consume-in-moderation/alcohol-full-story/)

These studies clearly show that alcohol can have a significant effect on body weight. So if you want to lose weight, it makes sense to reduce your alcohol consumption or to avoid drinking it altogether.

How I implemented it and what I noticed

I decided to avoid alcohol completely. At first, it was challenging, especially during social occasions. There weren't many of those during my weight loss phase anyway, as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, I switched to non-alcoholic beer and tried a few varieties available at the supermarket. But I remembered Nicole's words that it also contained a lot of calories. I also took a closer look at the label on the back of a small 330-milliliter bottle (~11 fl oz). I discovered that even this small alcohol-free beer contained 16.4 grams of carbohydrates, 7.9 grams of which were sugar. These were precisely the two things I had identified as my enemies in my battle to lose weight. So I quickly gave up alcohol-free beer again.

I'm also a wine lover. I significantly cut back on this too. Instead of buying a whole bottle, preferably red wine, almost every week and then drinking it at home over one or two evenings, I now only enjoyed wine on rare occasions, once every two or three weeks, and then only in smaller quantities—one glass, no more. I switched to dry white wine, which is less sweet and slightly lower in calories than red wine. On the rare occasions when I did drink, I diluted the dry white wine with water to make a white wine spritzer.

Later, I discovered organic lemonades as an alcohol-free alternative, of which there are a whole range of different brands with their own flavor creations. Unfortunately, here I faced the same dilemma: most varieties contain a lot of sugar. Too much to be compatible with my weight loss formula! But as a special, consciously enjoyed exception—and to get away from alcohol in the first place—a small bottle every few evenings is perfectly fine. Note my words: exception and consciously enjoyed. Don't let the exception become the rule—this applies to all the principles presented in this book and the occasional deviation from them.

What I noticed:

It's possible to go alcohol-free! In doing so, I discovered other unexpected benefits of giving up alcohol...

I kept a clear head, even in the evenings at parties or other events, which made it easier for me to strike up conversations with people—and I didn't have alcohol on my breath. I was able to think more clearly and my speech didn't start to slur as quickly as it does after drinking alcohol.

Small bottles (0.33 l or 11 fl oz) are perfectly adequate. You can wean yourself off the standard 0.5 l (16.9 fl oz) beer bottle by drinking more consciously (smaller sips, slower drinking) and get by with less. Again, it was just a matter of getting used to it...

So I ultimately switched to drinking much more water and infused water, as described in Principle 7, "Drink plenty of water." The change was remarkable. I slept better, felt more energetic, and noticed faster weight loss. My skin looked clearer, and I felt healthier overall.

Practical tips for reducing alcohol consumption

- Find alternatives: Opt for non-alcoholic beverages such as water, tea, or infused water. These drinks are not only calorie-free, but can also be delicious.
- Master social situations: Choose non-alcoholic alternatives at social events, such as non-alcoholic beer or mocktails (non-alcoholic cocktails that imitate a well-known cocktail). These offer the advantage of still having a "drink" in your hand without the negative effects of alcohol.
- Raise awareness: Keep a diary of your alcohol consumption to identify and change patterns. Write down when and why you drink alcohol and find alternative ways to relax or have fun in these situations. (A phone call with a loved one in the evening or a relaxation technique such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or aromatherapy with essential oils can be an alternative to an after-work drink to unwind after a stressful day.)

Frequently asked questions and misconceptions

- “Can I no longer drink alcohol at all?” Complete abstinence is ideal, but even reducing your intake can have positive effects. If you decide to have a drink now and then, make sure you enjoy it consciously and don't let it become a habit.
- “What about non-alcoholic beer?” Non-alcoholic beer is definitely an alternative, as it contains fewer calories and avoids the negative effects of alcohol. It offers you the opportunity to enjoy the feel and taste of beer without jeopardizing your weight loss success too much. However, please note the statements made above.

Action element

Follow these steps to successfully quit drinking alcohol:

1. Keep a diary: Record your alcohol consumption for a week and note down how you feel.
2. Try alcohol-free alternatives: Try different non-alcoholic drinks and find your favorites.
3. Develop social strategies: Think about how you can avoid alcohol in social situations.

It may seem difficult at first to give up alcohol, especially if it is an integral part of your life. But the benefits you can achieve are worth it. You will find that you feel better, have more energy, and lose weight faster. It is a small price to pay for a big improvement in your quality of life.

Take your time with these tasks and observe the effects on your body and well-being.

Principle #9 - Exercise Regularly

Nicole's tip

“Exercise regularly, Mr. Rudnik,” Nicole urged me. Exercise is essential when it comes to losing weight and staying healthy in the long term. “You don't have to do an intensive

fitness program. It's enough to exercise lightly on a regular basis. Preferably in the fresh air," Nicole added to her recommendation.

Her words were music to my ears. So I don't need to do any fitness training? Even light exercise will help me lose weight? Fantastic! That's exactly what I wanted to hear!

Let's take a closer look at why that is...

Why is exercise important for the body?

Exercise is like a magic key for your body. It not only improves cardiovascular health, but also strengthens the heart and promotes better blood circulation. If you exercise regularly, your metabolism will be boosted. This means that your body burns more energy, even when you are resting.

Exercise also promotes mental health. Have you ever noticed how good you feel after a walk? That's because exercise reduces stress and increases overall well-being. An evening walk can help you shake off the stress of the day and clear your mind. It's almost like giving your mind and body a break.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Regular exercise, even if it is light and moderate, has been shown to be an effective means of supporting weight loss. There are several scientific studies that support this claim.

Study 1: Effects of walking

A comprehensive meta-analysis examined the effects of pedometer-based walking programs (simply put: walking with a pedometer) on weight loss. The results showed that participants who regularly counted their steps and took moderate walks every day lost an average of about 1.27 kg (2.80 lbs) over several months. These programs increased the average daily step count and led to moderate but consistent weight loss. The study emphasized that even without changes in diet, increased physical activity was

sufficient to cause significant changes in body weight. This underscores the effectiveness of light exercise programs in supporting weight loss. (Source: Annals of Family Medicine: https://www.annfammed.org/content/6/1/69)

2. Study: Role of exercise in weight loss

Another study by the Mayo Clinic highlights the importance of regular exercise in relation to weight loss. This study emphasizes that regular exercise plays an important role in maintaining a calorie deficit, which is necessary for sustainable weight loss. Furthermore, it explains that physical activity not only helps burn calories, but also boosts metabolism and stabilizes weight in the long term. Regular walking, even in moderate amounts, helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases and improves overall fitness (Source: The Nutrition Source: https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/walking/)

These scientific findings underscore why regular exercise is a proven and tested principle for weight loss. It is not about doing intense workouts, but rather integrating small, sustainable changes into your everyday life. These can have a significant impact on your overall well-being and health.

How I implemented it and what I noticed

It was during the pandemic, I was officially unemployed, and I was preparing to become self-employed from home. This meant that I could organize my time freely and take time off to support my weight loss plan. I started with long walks through Magdeburg lasting several hours – I discovered new parts of the city, walked to the city limits and then back home again in a big loop. So I was out and about for two, three or four hours several times a week.

I also felt the effects of the training. As an untrained person, three-hour walks in winter, in wind and weather, were a small challenge for me, which put strain on my body and gently toned it.

Jogging wasn't for me; I had tried it and failed. Instead, I concentrated on this more leisurely form of regular exercise. In other words, losing weight the "easy way." And the walks had a positive effect!

Much later, shortly before his death, my stepfather gave me his fitness watch, which I have been wearing ever since. Now I can keep track of my daily steps. Depending on the day, I walk between 12,000 and sometimes over 25,000 steps – that's about 9 to 19 kilometers (5.6 to 11.8 miles). This motivates me and helps me achieve my goal of getting enough exercise. I regularly walk around the city, in the city park, and in nature. I also enjoy exploring other cities on foot. These walks have become my personal time-out, and I really enjoy them. They allow me to recharge my batteries, get some fresh air, and relax.

Practical tips for more exercise in everyday life

Here are some practical tips on how you can integrate more exercise into your everyday life:

- Stairs instead of elevators: Every step counts. Climbing stairs is a great way to strengthen your leg muscles and burn calories.
- Incorporate walks into your daily routine: Use your lunch breaks or the evening hours for a walk. Even a ten-minute walk can work wonders.
- Active hobbies: Find hobbies that involve exercise. Gardening, dancing, or even playing with your children or grandchildren can help you stay active.
- Combine exercise with social activities: Why not meet friends for a walk instead of sitting in a café? Not only is this healthy, it's also a great opportunity to chat and spend time together.

Frequently asked questions and misconceptions

- "Do I have to train intensively to lose weight?" No, you don't. Regular, moderate exercise such as walking can be just as effective. The important thing is to keep moving and activate your body. Every movement counts.

- “Is it enough if I'm only active once a week?” Consistency is key. Try to exercise every day. Even small steps count and add up over time.
- “I don't have time for exercise.” Exercise doesn't have to be time-consuming. Small changes in your daily routine, such as walking shorter distances or pacing around during a phone call, can make a difference.

Note

You may feel a little overwhelmed right now or think that none of this applies to your life. I understand that. Change is always a challenge, especially when you've tried many things and often failed. But remember that you are not alone. Many people have been down the same path and succeeded. You don't have to change everything at once. Start small. Every step you take brings you closer to your goal.

It's about finding a method that suits you and that you can integrate into your everyday life. Exercise should be fun and not an additional source of stress. Imagine how you feel when you come home after a long walk. You've done something good for your body and your soul. You'll be proud of yourself for getting active.

Finally, I would like to encourage you: give it a try. Set small goals and reward yourself for every success. It is a process, and every small step is a big step forward.

Action element

These tasks will help you incorporate more exercise into your daily routine:

1. Plan daily walks: Set yourself the goal of walking for at least 30 minutes every day. Enter these times in your calendar so that you see them as an integral part of your daily routine.
2. Count your steps: Get a fitness watch or download a pedometer app to your phone. Your goal should be to reach at least 10,000 steps per day (about 7 km).

3. Move around in your everyday life: Think of three situations in your daily life where you can move more. Examples: Take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk shorter distances, walk around while talking on the phone.
4. Plan active get-togethers: Arrange to meet a friend for a walk in the park or outdoors.

Complete these tasks within the next week and observe how your exercise habits change. Write down your progress and how you feel. Ready? Let's go!

Principle #10 - Persevere, Measure Your Progress

Nicole's tip

At the end of her consultation, Nicole said kindly, "Don't put too much pressure on yourself. Always take it step by step. Keep at it and you will see success." The tone of her voice made it sound like it wasn't so bad. As if I could do it too, even under my difficult circumstances. She managed to encourage me and dispel my doubts.

In fact, it's just as Nicole said: too much pressure is the enemy of success. Have you ever thought that you have to be perfect right away? Maybe you were disappointed when the scale didn't show the desired result after a week. Putting too much pressure on yourself won't help here. Small steps are the key. Always remember that it's not about next week, but about your entire future life.

Here's another vivid example: Imagine you're building a house. You lay one brick after another. Sometimes you don't see a house yet, just a pile of bricks. But little by little, a solid building emerges. It's the same with your weight loss journey. Every small success is a brick on your way to your goal.

Let's now take a concrete look at how you can persevere on your upcoming weight loss journey and how you can measure your progress.

How can I keep this up?

Motivation isn't always easy to find, especially when the road ahead is long. But there are methods that can help you.

Motivation methods

- Reward systems: Reward yourself for your successes. Have you stuck with it for a week? Treat yourself to a small gift (that has nothing to do with food), perhaps a nice book or a relaxing evening.
- Visualize your goals: Imagine how you will feel when you have achieved your goal. Make it real in your mind. This will help you stick with it.
- Develop routines: Fixed habits are like a safe haven. When you have a routine, you don't think about it anymore, you just do it. Start small: A walk after dinner, a glass of water before each meal.
- Seek support: Share your journey with others. Find a friend who motivates you or join an online community. It helps immensely to know that you're not alone.
- Am I not allowed to indulge in any exceptions? Yes, exceptions are allowed. After all, who wants a life without little pleasures? The key is to handle them correctly. That means getting back on track afterwards.

A piece of cake at a birthday party or a cozy evening with *a* glass of wine – that's perfectly okay. These exceptions make life worth living and keep your motivation high.

- Dealing with exceptions: It's important to get back into your routine after an exception. Don't let an exception become the rule. Enjoy consciously and without guilt.
- Seeing progress: Remember your progress, not perfection. Celebrate small victories, such as a healthy meal or a day when you drank enough water. It makes a difference.
- Find balance: Plan your exceptions. If you know that a special event is coming up, you can make the day before and after particularly healthy. This will help you maintain balance.

How do I track my progress?

Tracking your progress is crucial to staying motivated and seeing what works and what doesn't.

- Daily weighing: I am a proponent of daily weighing. This gives you accurate feedback on how your diet from the previous day has affected you and allows you to make immediate adjustments. The disadvantage of this method is that you notice every little fluctuation and sometimes it seems like progress is very slow. Nevertheless, weigh yourself at a fixed time every day and write down your weight. But remember that fluctuations are normal and it's the overall picture that counts.
- Measure your body: A tape measure can show more than the scales. Waist circumference is a good indicator of your progress and, in my opinion, is sufficiently meaningful if you are a man.

If you are a woman, measure these body circumferences:

1. Waist circumference: Measure at the level of the navel.
2. Hip circumference: Measure at the widest point of the hips.
3. Chest circumference: Measure across the nipples.
4. Waist: Measure at the narrowest point of the waist.
5. Thigh circumference: Measure at the widest point of the thighs.
6. Arms: Measure the circumference of the upper arm at the widest point.

These measurements will help you see progress that the scale doesn't show. Measure once a week and write down the values.

- Bioimpedance analysis: These measurements show you your body composition. Muscle mass, fat percentage, body water percentage—all of this helps to give you a comprehensive picture. A measurement every six months or once a year is usually sufficient.
- Documentation: A diary or app can help you keep track of everything. Write down your weight, your measurements, but also how you feel. This will help you

recognize patterns and respond better. Search your app store for “weight loss tracker” or “weight loss app” to find suitable apps that can help you.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Slow and steady wins the race. You're probably familiar with this old saying, and it applies here too.

- Long-term success: Losing weight quickly sounds tempting, but it often leads to the yo-yo effect. Slow, healthy weight loss ensures that you maintain your weight.
- Adjustment period: Diets that promise quick results are often not sustainable. Your body needs time to adjust to new habits.
- Healthy lifestyle: It's not just about losing weight, but about living a healthier life overall. Small positive changes add up to big successes.

An important aspect of sustainable weight loss is gradual, slow weight reduction. A study published in the journal Obesity shows that slow and steady weight loss leads to better long-term results than rapid weight loss. The reason for this is that slow changes are easier to integrate into everyday life, thus creating lasting, healthy habits. (Source: Canada Pharmacy Depot: https://www.canadapharmacydepot.com/blog/weight-loss/lifestyle-changes-for-sustainable-weight-loss)

How I implemented it and what I noticed

- Steady progress motivated me: It was actually the steady, small progress on the scale that kept me motivated. After just one month, I saw a significant loss of about three kilos (6.6 pounds), according to my records. So, of course, I was super happy that something was finally happening, and I stuck with it and wanted to keep losing weight.
- Weighing myself daily was revealing: I weighed myself every day, always in the morning, after emptying my bladder and going to the toilet. This meant that my physical conditions were always almost identical and I had the best comparison

values. I didn't lose weight every day compared to the previous day. But I got to know my body and its weight loss process very well. For example, if I had drunk a glass of wine or enjoyed a rich meal the night before, I immediately noticed the effect on the scales the next morning. This allowed me to experience Nicole's theoretical statement that alcohol hinders weight loss in my own practical example. In this way, I gained my own insights instead of having to rely on theories or statements from others.

- My records: I basically just recorded my daily weight over all those months on small pieces of paper with a pencil. I only noted the date and my weight in kilograms. I recommend that you do better than I did and at least use some kind of notebook or diary. Or even the digital version, in a (cloud) spreadsheet such as Google Sheets or a special app. I recorded my waist circumference every few days in a fitness app with a tracking function specifically for this value.
- Exact body measurements: After the two BIA measurements taken as part of my liver fasting at the beginning of my collaboration with nutritionist Nicole, I didn't have another exact measurement taken until a year later. The result was amazing and showed my very positive progress. In particular, the figures showed that I had not lost any valuable muscle mass. That had been my secret fear. Because I often failed to consume the amount of protein recommended in this book on a daily basis. I was very pleased with the surprisingly good results, which confirmed that the path Nicole had shown me, as well as my small additions to her approach, had actually done a lot for me.
- Exceptions allowed: I noticed something very curious after a few exceptions with fast food and kebabs. Namely, that despite the lavish, irregular meal the day before, I hadn't gained weight the next morning when I stepped on the scale, but was actually a little lighter. It seemed as if my body had used this once- or twice-weekly exception to take a deep breath and flush itself out with heavy food. Mind you, I always stuck to one exception day and never made an exception for several days in a row.
- Achievements brought to mind: I also had phases where I asked myself, why isn't it continuing steadily? Why do I weigh more again today? By nature, I am

sometimes overly ambitious when it comes to my goals and want to achieve too much too quickly. But somehow I managed to stay calm and patiently stick to my proven strategy. It helped me to keep reminding myself of what I had already achieved. Three kilos (6.6 pounds) less in the first month, a good 2.5 kilos (5.5 pounds) in the second month, and so on. This allowed me to accept and overcome the small "setbacks" that caused my weight loss process to stall. Overthinking or dwelling on it doesn't help. Just look forward to your next porridge breakfast, your next delicious vegetable stir-fry, and keep going. Keep going... I managed to stick with it for a whole year until I had lost 25 kilos (55 pounds).

- Sharing with others: Talking to Romy, my best friend at the time, also helped me through a challenging phase. She was also trying to lose weight and was taking a very similar approach. So we often shared what we were discovering, how we were feeling, and how we were progressing. When she was still alive, I also told my grandmother about my progress. I was able to give her a concrete argument: "Grandma, I've already lost 6.5 kilos (14.33 pounds) by giving up bread and potatoes. So I'd like to continue and not eat a sandwich for dinner today. I don't want to jeopardize my weight loss goal." She understood that, for the most part.

Practical tips for sticking to a healthy weight loss plan

It's often the small, practical tips that make all the difference.

- Daily planning: Plan your meals and exercise sessions in advance. This helps you stay on track and avoid making excuses.
- Motivational aids: Positive self-talk and inspiration from role models can work wonders. Look at success stories and let them inspire you.
- Set rewards: Small rewards for milestones achieved are important. They motivate you and make the journey more enjoyable.
- Accept setbacks: Everyone has a bad day sometimes. That's normal. The important thing is to keep going and not give up.

Frequently asked questions and misunderstandings

- “How often should I weigh myself?” Once a day at the same time is sufficient, e.g., in the morning after your first visit to the bathroom. Note that fluctuations are normal.
- “Which scale is suitable?” It should be a digital scale. It shows your weight accurate to at least one hundred grams. There are also special body fat scales that provide additional information such as body fat percentage and muscle mass. However, these are not absolutely necessary. Choose what suits you best and motivates you.
- “Is it normal for me to lose more weight sometimes and less weight other times?” Yes, that is completely normal. Your body needs time to adjust.
- “Do I have to starve myself to lose weight?” No, that is a myth. It is about eating a balanced and healthy diet, not starving yourself. If you follow the 10+1 principles of my weight loss formula, you are in a very good position.

Action item

1. Daily weighing: Weigh yourself at the same time every morning and record your weight in a journal or app. Search for “weight loss tracker” in the app store.
2. Measure your body circumference: Measure your waist circumference (if you are a man) and other body measurements (if you are a woman) once a week and record the values.
3. Visualize your goals: Write down a specific goal and hang it up where you can see it. Imagine how you will feel when you achieve it.
4. Plan exceptions: Consciously plan one small exception per week and enjoy it without feeling guilty.
5. Seek support: Share your progress with a friend or in an online community.

With these tips and strategies, you are well equipped to follow your path. It may not always be easy, but it is doable. You can do it!

Principle #11 – Booster: Only Eat Within A Fixed Time Window

Introduction

In this additional eleventh principle, you will learn how eating within a fixed time window can be a real booster for your weight loss journey. Imagine if you could start burning fat earlier and extend it beyond the night, so that you can burn significantly more fat every day. Sounds tempting, right?

This approach is particularly suitable for people who have already tried various diets and often suffer from the yo-yo effect. You know the feeling when the pounds come back after the diet. This weight loss principle can help you break this cycle. It regulates your metabolism and optimizes fat burning. At the same time, you can learn to eat more consciously and control your hunger better.

But one thing at a time...

Nicole's tip

Nicole recommended that I not eat breakfast right after getting up, but rather delay this first meal of the day a little. “This gives your body another hour or two to continue burning fat that started overnight,” she explained. “And do the same in the evening. You should eat your last meal of the day at least three hours before going to bed. That way, your stomach won't be so full when you go to bed. You'll sleep better that way,” Nicole added.

How did I come up with this principle?

I had received Nicole's tips. She mentioned the term “intermittent fasting” but didn't say a word about it. By chance, I was back in our book and magazine store at the main train station and got stuck at the health guide shelf. A book with a delicious-looking cucumber and feta salad on the cover and the title “Low Carb Intermittent Fasting”

caught my interest. The subtitle, “How to kick-start your weight loss,” sounded particularly interesting. Lose weight super fast... “Yes! Bring it on!” I thought, and took this book by Marie Gründel home with me. Low carb was already my thing anyway, on Nicole's advice. Now I was really interested in how I could kickstart my weight loss.

Are you ready to get started? Let's dive into this topic...

What exactly is intermittent fasting?

Intermittent fasting means that you only eat during a specific time window and fast for the rest of the day. This may sound difficult at first, but let's take a closer look.

There are different types of intermittent fasting:

- 16/8 method: You fast for 16 hours and eat within an 8-hour window. For example, you eat your first meal at 10 a.m. and your last at 6 p.m.
- 5:2 diet: You eat normally five days a week and severely restrict your calorie intake on two days, for example to 500-600 calories per day.
- Eat-Stop-Eat: You fast for 24 hours once or twice a week. This means that if you eat dinner at 7 p.m. today, you won't eat again until 7 p.m. tomorrow.

In the following, I will only discuss the 16/8 method, as I have used it successfully myself.

History and significance of fasting in general

Fasting is not a new invention. It has been rooted in various cultures and religions for thousands of years. Whether in Ramadan in Islam, in Christian Lent, or in Judaism, fasting often has spiritual significance. But there have also been times when people had to fast out of necessity, for example, during food shortages. This long history shows that fasting is not only possible but also natural and often healthy.

Why is this a proven weight loss principle?

Intermittent fasting is a proven weight loss principle because it encourages the body to draw on stored fat reserves. During fasting periods, insulin levels drop, which facilitates fat burning. At the same time, intermittent fasting can help regulate appetite and reduce food cravings.

Here's a quick example: Imagine your body is like a car. If you constantly fill up the tank, the car will never get to use the reserve tank. But if you don't fill up for a while, the car will use the reserve tank. It works the same way with your body and stored fat.

Here are two scientific studies that examined the effectiveness of intermittent fasting.

Intermittent fasting in general:

A comprehensive study published by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) shows that intermittent fasting offers numerous health benefits. The research findings suggest that intermittent fasting can lead to improvements in various health conditions, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and neurological disorders. The key mechanism here is what is known as "metabolic switching," in which the body switches from glucose to ketones stored in fat as its energy source during fasting. This process promotes fat burning and improves glucose regulation, increases stress resistance, and suppresses inflammation. (Source: National Institute on Aging: https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/research-intermittent-fasting-shows-health-benefits)

The 16/8 method in particular:

Another study from the University of Illinois at Chicago specifically examined the 16/8 method of intermittent fasting. This method, which involves fasting for 16 hours and eating within an 8-hour window, showed significant results in terms of weight loss and improved metabolic health. Participants in this study experienced a reduction in body weight and an improvement in important health parameters such as insulin sensitivity and blood pressure. These results support the idea that the 16/8 method can be an effective and sustainable strategy for weight loss and improving overall health (source: National Institute on Aging: https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/research-intermittent-fasting-shows-health-benefits).

These studies provide strong scientific support for the effectiveness of intermittent fasting, and the 16/8 method in particular, as a proven weight loss strategy. They show that this method not only contributes to weight loss, but also offers comprehensive health benefits, making it a valuable component of your weight loss plan.

How I implemented it and what I noticed

After receiving Nicole's suggestions to delay breakfast and not eat anything late at night before going to bed, I simply tried it out. So, after getting up in the morning, I didn't prepare my porridge right away. Instead, I drank plenty of water first. At first, I postponed my breakfast by one hour, later by two. So I always ate breakfast around 9 a.m. At first, I still felt very hungry and my body demanded an early breakfast. But that subsided. It got used to having two or three hours to wake up, during which I supplied it with water until it got its porridge.

I sometimes drank my coffee shortly after getting up, at my usual breakfast time, to wake up. Occasionally, I also drank it with my porridge, a little later. I didn't find any consistency here. I think everyone has to try it for themselves. Many people I ask about this say, "Coffee in the morning is a must for me to wake up!"

In the evening, I also took Nicole's advice and started eating dinner an hour earlier, at around 6 p.m. That worked fine too. So I gently narrowed my time window by eating. At first, my eating interval was still 10 hours, from around 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. But I was able to shorten it further.

Later, I realized that if I didn't eat breakfast until 9 a.m., I didn't need to eat lunch at 12 noon. That was too soon for me, only three hours later, and I wasn't hungry enough yet. So I stuck to my previous 5-hour interval between breakfast and lunch and postponed my lunch until later – around 2 p.m. So all my daily meals were pushed back.

Then I realized that if I didn't eat lunch until around 2 or 3 p.m., I couldn't possibly eat dinner again at 6 p.m. It was the same thing all over again: not enough time in between to get hungry again.

So it finally came to pass that the late lunch around 2 or 3 p.m. became my last meal of the day. So: I had breakfast at 9 a.m., ate lunch around 3 p.m., and then that was it. A six-hour interval, my new time window/eating interval.

So I had shortened the 16/8 method I had initially practiced to an 18/6 method. That sounds even more extreme—and it is. But I got used to this rhythm and eating only two meals a day: breakfast consisting of porridge, lunch consisting of a complete vegetable stir-fry, as described in the weight loss formula above.

And from 3 p.m. onwards, after my lunch, I now fasted until the next breakfast, around 9 a.m. the following day, i.e. 18 hours.

It took some getting used to at first, but after a few weeks my body had adjusted. I felt more energetic and less hungry between meals. My body now had more time to burn fat. And the results on the scale proved me right. So I stuck with intermittent fasting.

Practical tips for implementing it in everyday life

Here are some practical tips that can help you integrate intermittent fasting into your everyday life:

- Drink plenty of water: This helps reduce feelings of hunger and keeps you hydrated. We talked about this in Principle 7.
- Plan your meals: Make sure they are nutritious and balanced. This will keep you feeling full for longer.
- Distraction: Keep yourself busy with activities so you're not constantly thinking about food. A walk or a good book can work wonders.
- Patience: Give your body time to get used to the new rhythm. It may take a few weeks to fully adjust.

Frequently asked questions and misconceptions

- “Do I have to skip breakfast?” No, the idea is to eat breakfast later in the day. This gives your body more time to burn fat overnight.

- “Can I drink coffee while fasting?” Yes, but preferably without sugar or milk. Black coffee or herbal tea are good options.
- “Won't I be hungry all the time?” Maybe a little at first, but your body will get used to it and the feeling of hunger will decrease. You'll find that you have fewer cravings.
- “Is intermittent fasting suitable for everyone?” No, if you have certain health conditions or are pregnant, you should consult a doctor first.

Conclusion

Intermittent fasting can be an effective way to lose weight and improve your metabolism. It requires patience and adjustment, but the benefits can be enormous. By eating within a fixed time window, you can optimize your fat burning and feel more energetic. Give it a try and see how your body responds. And remember: it's a path to a healthier and happier life.

Action item

Here are some action-oriented tasks to help you integrate intermittent fasting into your weight loss plan:

1. Set a start date: Choose a day in the coming week to start intermittent fasting.
2. Determine your time window: Decide on a window for eating, e.g., 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (16/8 method).
3. Plan your meals: Plan two nutrient-rich meals within this window, plus another small snack if necessary.
4. Ensure hydration: Drink plenty of water, herbal tea, or black coffee during the fasting period.
5. Document your first week: Write down your meal times, what you ate, and how you felt each day.
6. Reflect and adjust: After a week, review your notes and adjust your time window or meals if necessary.

To help you decide whether interval fasting makes sense for you as a booster, I have prepared a decision-making guide in the later chapter “Start the 30-day challenge.” Just keep reading or jump there now.

Take a deep breath! What now?

Okay, we've got that. That was quite a lot of information to take in. Take a moment to breathe and let it sink in.

You have now learned about the individual principles of my weight loss success in detail. I hope you are still with me and haven't switched off in the meantime and thought, “This is too much for me, I can't do it...” Or even, “This and that is totally wrong! I've heard this and that elsewhere. Björn has no idea...”

I can totally understand all of these reactions. Nutrition is a complex, controversial topic. There are constantly new studies and provocative headlines in the media and advertising. You pick up something here and then something there that completely contradicts what you've heard elsewhere. Even experts, doctors, and scientists have different views and, based on these, sometimes make contradictory recommendations, which they can even explain plausibly using scientific models, so that everything sounds logical and like the only right way to go.

This makes it so difficult for those of us who want to lose weight, without expert knowledge or experience, and leaves us completely confused and overwhelmed. At least that's how it was for me when I first started learning about “healthy eating.”

Let's take a short break together.

Please put aside any reservations you may have. Calm your thoughts and emotions. Stay open to the following final important steps. You are almost there; most of the work is already behind you.

What now?

Now we will adapt the weight loss formula presented to your individual situation. This is where your food diary comes in.

Your task was to document your diet over a week and highlight the foods you ate during this time in color to get a clear overview of your eating habits. Now we will take a look at this evaluation of your current eating habits and compare it with the proven principles of the weight loss formula. The next step is to use the recorded current picture to create a personalized nutrition plan that is both effective and feasible for you.

This is absolutely necessary, as everyone has different eating habits. I don't know how healthy or unhealthy your current diet is. Perhaps your current diet already largely corresponds to the principles presented here? And only minor adjustments are necessary. Or maybe you really need to start changing your diet in several areas.

We will take a closer look at this in the following chapter and provide you with a concrete action plan on how to successfully integrate what you have learned from my formula into your everyday life and achieve success.

At this point, you are now, to a certain extent, your own coach. This task is usually performed by a nutritionist. However, with my guidance, you can do it yourself. Do not worry... Let us approach this in a structured manner, and you will be able to implement it on your own.

Have you taken a deep breath and calmed down? Then let us continue...

Chapter 7

Create Your Customized Nutrition Plan

We will now take each of the 10+1 nutritional principles from my formula and you will explicitly examine the extent to which you have already been following them and adjust your new nutrition plan accordingly. 10+1 because of the ten main principles and the one booster, which I would like to define as an optional addition.

Here is a list of all the principles discussed...

1. Eliminate foods that are high in carbohydrates
2. Integrate vegetables as the main component of your nutrition plan
3. Reduce meat and choose healthier options
4. Add protein as a new source of satiety
5. Add (healthy) fat
6. Avoid sugar
7. Drink plenty of water
8. Avoid alcohol
9. Exercise regularly
10. Persevere, measure your progress
11. Booster: Only eat within a fixed time window

Now take a close look at each of these points. Take out your color-coded food diary. You will also need a blank form that is identical in structure to the food diary. Fill out this blank form with your new, modified diet plan.

Now go through the principles one by one.

1. Eliminate foods that are high in carbohydrates

These are pasta, rice, potatoes, and bread, which you have marked in blue in your diary. Look at all your meals each day—breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. How often does a blue mark appear in your diary? Remove the corresponding food from your diet plan.

2. Incorporate vegetables as the main component

Check your "colorful" food diary to see how often green marks (for vegetables) appear. Increase the proportion of vegetables in your new diet to the point where you no longer have anything blue (high in carbohydrates) in your daily plan and you have at least one (green) main meal with vegetables as the main component every day.

You can even enter two vegetable-heavy main meals (lunch and dinner). This can be particularly useful at the beginning of your weight loss journey to ensure you feel full enough if you have previously eaten three meals a day (or more). You can never get too much of vegetables. For specific recipe suggestions, see Principle 2 – or the bonus "21 super simple but delicious recipe ideas" in the resource list. This could be a complete vegetable stir-fry, for example, with a vegetable mix + protein source + fat.

3. Reduce meat and choose healthier options

How much orange and red do you see in your food diary? Orange (white meat) is a good source of protein and can stay in your diet. Red (red meat) goes out. More on this in the next point.

4. Add protein to fill you up

Are you already eating enough protein? Add one or two protein sources from principle 4 in the formula to every vegetable-heavy main meal, e.g., the vegetable stir-fry. This could be either animal or plant-based protein.

Determining protein content:

After your first meal, take a look at how much protein is contained in the respective ingredients by studying the nutritional information on the back of the packaging, determining or estimating the amount you have consumed in grams, and then using a simple rule of three from school to determine the amount of protein you have consumed.

For example: You bought 400 grams of packaged chicken strips. The label on the back states that 100 g contain 23.4 g of protein. You made four small portions from the 400-gram package. One portion therefore contains (approximately) 100 g. This means you don't even need to do the math. The portion of chicken strips you ate contained 23.4 g of protein. Go through all the ingredients for a sample meal in this way. This will give you a feel for how much protein you actually need to consume per day and how much is actually contained in your food. You can then adjust the amounts of protein sources accordingly.

5. Add (healthy) fat

Add a healthy source of fat to each new main meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner), see principle 5 of the formula.

6. Avoid sugar

How many pink marks for snacks/sweets do you find in your diary? Every day? With several main meals and even in between? That's far too much... Be sure to eliminate pink (sweet) things from your new diet. Be strict! Check Principle 6 to see what alternatives there are for adding sweetness to your food.

7. Drink plenty of water

Add up the amount of water you have drunk each day so far and add other beverages such as soft drinks, tea, and coffee. What is your total daily intake? One liter (34 fl oz), one and a half? Not enough. Drink more! Sugary drinks such as cola or iced tea are now off the menu. The same goes for energy drinks and similar beverages that contain sugar substitutes. Gradually increase your water consumption and try sugar-free alternatives as described in principle 7. Drink coffee in moderation (maximum of about 4 cups per day).

8. Avoid alcohol

Reduce your alcohol consumption to very few exceptions as moments of enjoyment—a glass of wine or a beer every two weeks or so is okay. The less, the better. Switch to non-alcoholic beverages that are also low in sugar, see Principle 8.

9. Exercise regularly

Do you get enough exercise? Do you walk 10,000 or more steps a day? If not, change that with the tips in principle 9. If you already get enough exercise, that's good. Then you may need to intensify your weight loss measures. More on that in a moment.

10. Persevere, measure your progress

Are you already using the motivation methods described in principle 10? Introduce them gradually into your everyday life, which will further support your plans.

Create an action overview

Now create a table overview that shows you exactly where you have deficits so you can address them accordingly. On the left are the most important factors derived from the principles. Then there are three columns for the frequency of consumption. Behind each column, write a comment in brackets evaluating your previous consumption based on what you have learned here. For example, “increase,” “reduce,” “okay,” or “avoid.” The cells that correspond to the target range are highlighted in green. This is the rough target. It might look something like this...

Carbohydrates			frequently (reduce)
Vegetables	rare (increase)		
White meat		moderate (okay)	
Red meat			frequently (reduce)
Proteins		moderate (increase)	
Sugar			frequently (reduce)
Water	rare (increase)		
Sugary drinks		moderate (avoid)	
Alcohol			frequently (avoid)
Movement		moderate (increase)	

Now you have a great overview, complete with specific instructions for you. You can find a template for this in the resource list in the Kickstart section of the member area.

Booster yes or no?

Now you have to decide whether you should integrate the intermittent fasting booster into your weight loss routine. As mentioned, this method is a more extreme approach and is not recommended for everyone—especially not right at the beginning of your weight loss phase. Let's clarify whether you should try it.

Take a look at the table you just created, which shows whether your current diet is already in the green, desirable range.

Here is my little decision-making aid for you:

If you see absolutely no progress (weight loss/circumference reduction) over several weeks (three to four weeks) and...

- 0 to 6 factors are in the “green” range: Don't try intermittent fasting yet; focus first on implementing the other factors that are not yet “green.”
- 7 to 9 factors in the “green” range: You can consider intermittent fasting. Start slowly by limiting the time window for your food intake according to the easier 16/8 method (8 hours of eating, 16 hours of fasting) described in the ‘Booster’ section.
- All 10 factors in the “green” range: Start intermittent fasting using the 16/8 method described above. See if you notice any success. If necessary, try to gradually narrow the time window further, towards 18/6 (6 hours of eating, 18 hours of fasting).

In any case, be sure to read the section “Booster: Only eat within a fixed time window” carefully again.

All set

Once you have completed the tasks described in this section, you will have your new nutrition plan with specific ingredients for every meal for a whole week. You will also have used the previous action overview to illustrate exactly where you can start. And you will have clarified the question of how you should use the booster or whether you should concentrate on implementing all the other factors and principles first.

You are now optimally prepared to start your weight loss journey. We will discuss how to do this in the next chapter.

Chapter 8

Start The 30-Day Challenge

The time has come... Let's get started!

I challenge you to seriously try out my weight loss formula! For 30 days straight.

Why 30 days? There are a few principles to follow, which means you will probably have to change some of your current habits. You need to try out these new principles, learn them, and probably adapt them to your life and personal preferences. Your body needs a certain amount of time to respond.

Some changes will produce quick results (immediately or after just a few days). Other changes will take two, three, or four weeks to see the effects described. Thirty days, or a good four weeks, is therefore the optimal time frame for this challenge.

From my own experience, I know that it is hardly possible to implement all the tips in this book from day one. Changes, especially very fundamental ones in your daily behavior patterns, take time. It is also not necessary to follow all the principles 100% right away. I didn't manage to do that either, and it would probably put too much pressure on you. That would be a hindrance to successful change. It is essential that you retain the joy of trying out and discovering new eating habits.

Nevertheless, you need to take a serious approach. A half-hearted implementation along the lines of “Okay, I'll try this for a few days. But I'm skeptical. Well, we'll see...” will not work.

Both your unconditional motivation, which manifests your will to succeed, and your openness and curiosity about positive results are now required. We laid the foundation for this together in the first third of the book.

I think it's extremely important that after the 30 days of the challenge, you see a result that surprises you in a positive way. Then my weight loss method will convince you and you'll be motivated to stay on track and lose more pounds.

Preparing for the challenge

As a reminder and summary, here is a brief overview of all the things from the action items in the previous chapters that you should have done before starting your 30-day challenge. Use this overview as a checklist.

- I have read Björn's story and learned which weight loss methods are less effective and what successes are possible with *Weight Loss Relaxed*.
- I have explored my innermost motivations for losing weight.
- I have imagined my vision of my new self and my new life and illustrated it on a vision board.
- I have set myself a major goal that I want to achieve in the next 6-12 months, which is specific, measurable, attractive, realistic, and time-bound.
- I have broken down my main goal into smaller, achievable intermediate goals that I want to achieve each month.
- I have sought out allies, informed them of my plans, and asked for their support.
- I recorded my current diet in a food diary for a week, marking the foods I ate in 5 different colors by group, which gave me a clear picture of my current nutritional situation.

- I studied all 10+1 principles of the weight loss formula and realized that their effects are explainable, proven, and scientifically substantiated.
- I created a new diet plan that I can implement.
- I created an action overview that shows me exactly what my current situation is, what my ideal situation should be, and what changes I need to make to get there.
- I found out about the optional booster and checked whether and when it would be suitable for me.

All done so far? Great! Then let's go through some more details that are important before you start your 30-day challenge.

What else is important before you start

Documentation

- Before you start, record everything. Write down your body measurements and your starting weight.
- Have an expert perform a “bioelectrical impedance analysis” (BIA measurement) to determine your exact body composition. (For example, at nutritionists, medical care centers, or some gyms; costs around $35-$70).
- Take “before” photos of yourself. These will help you see your progress, motivate you, and create a wow effect for yourself and others when you reach your weight loss goal.

At the beginning, you often don't see big changes on the scale, but your photos and measurements will show you that something is happening.

Choose a time frame

Choose a quiet time for your challenge. An upcoming all-inclusive vacation or stressful work weeks are not ideal. Why? You want to give yourself the best chance of success

without major distractions. Imagine trying to swim while carrying a heavy backpack. Without the backpack, you can swim much more easily.

Continue to participate in social life

Don't think you have to cancel everything. Family gatherings, birthdays, weddings, etc. are important. Be there, but adjust your eating habits. Stick to your new eating habits. For example, instead of reaching for the cream cake at the party, grab a handful of nuts or vegetable sticks. That way, you can be there and stay true to your plan.

Clean out your food supplies

Look in your cupboards. Get rid of the unhealthy stuff! Chocolate, chips, sugar—all of that has to go. Buy healthy foods. A shopping list will help you avoid falling back into old patterns. Fill your refrigerator with fresh or frozen vegetables, proteins, and healthy fats.

Draw up a contract

Make a contract with yourself. Write down that you will do everything you can to be successful. Hang the contract on the refrigerator or somewhere you will see it often. This will remind you of your promise every day.

Here's an example of what your contract with yourself could look like...

My weight loss promise

I, [name], promise myself that I will do everything I can to achieve my health goals over the next 30 days. I will stick to my new diet plan, avoid unhealthy foods, and document my progress every day. I will be patient and open to change without putting pressure on myself. I am determined to take this challenge seriously and with full commitment in order to achieve my goal and become a healthier me.

Date: _____ Signature:_____

You can find a template of this contract to download and print in the resource list under Kickstart.

Okay, now that you have assured yourself of your full commitment, you can get started...

Ready, set, go!

Let's kick off your 30-day challenge. Now let's take a look at the upcoming tasks, challenges, and topics for each of the four weeks.

Week 1: The beginning

First steps

Start trying out different vegetable combinations, protein and fat sources. What do you like? What is good for you? Drink more water. Start with one extra glass a day and increase it gradually. Your body will thank you for it.

Drastically reduce your sugar consumption

Sugar is your enemy. Eliminate it from your diet as much as possible. Look closely at the ingredient list. Sugar is often hidden in processed foods. Your body will thank you with fewer cravings.

Goal

In this first week, try to at least start implementing the first eight principles of the formula, namely:

1. Eliminate carbohydrate-containing foods
2. Integrate vegetables as a main component
3. Reduce meat and choose healthier options
4. Supplement with protein
5. Add healthy fats
6. Avoid sugar

7. Drink plenty of water
8. Avoid alcohol

I'm not asking you to follow all the principles to the letter in this first week. Don't get me wrong. But you should at least give them a serious try to test them out and notice the first differences compared to your previous diet.

Week 2: Make adjustments

Identify your favorites

Which new foods did you enjoy during the first week? If you are not feeling full, increase the amount of protein and healthy fats. Your body needs energy to lose weight healthily.

Practical tips

Optimize your meals. Write down what worked well and what didn't. It's important to avoid pressure. Approach the changes with curiosity and openness. Remember that there is no perfect recipe. What works for you is the most important thing.

Keep the tips in mind

This week, read through all the action points of the 10+1 weight loss principles again carefully. Which principles have you already implemented? Which ones could you still incorporate?

Forced implementation

Now implement the first eight principles more strictly. Also incorporate principle 9, more exercise, into your weight loss plan. Be honest with yourself.

Keep trying

Try out even more different sources of protein and fat that you didn't get to try in the first week. Discover a different source of protein every day.

Week 3: Find variations

Get creative

Now, after two weeks, you have found a selection of vegetables, proteins, and fats that you like. Now play around with your meals. Find new combinations of your favorite dishes. Use spices, herbs, and other small ingredients that fit the principles of the formula, enhance your meals, and create variety. Don't let boredom creep into your kitchen. Variety is the key.

Check your progress

Have you seen any results yet? If not, consider the intermittent fasting booster. It can be a powerful aid. Stay committed, but don't put too much pressure on yourself. Every body reacts differently. Patience is key here.

Week 4: Getting used to it and fine-tuning

Getting used to it

After three weeks, your body has now gotten used to the new eating habits. Adjust the amount and frequency of your meals if necessary. Maybe you can already reduce the portion sizes a little compared to the first week? Listen to your body. It will show you what it needs.

Ignite your boosters

If you are not yet seeing measurable results, incorporate intermittent fasting for this week. Observe how your body reacts. Every small step brings you further.

After the challenge: Take stock

Did you stick with it for 30 days? Then give yourself a big pat on the back—well done!

Now it's time to take stock in detail. Here's how to evaluate your challenge...

Hard results

Measure your weight and body measurements. Compare your values after 30 days with the values before the challenge. What has changed? Record your results.

Soft results

Reflect on your well-being over the last 30 days. How did it develop over the individual weeks? Have you gotten used to the new habits? Do you feel better? Your sense of well-being is just as important as the numbers on the scale.

Continuation

Set yourself long-term goals. How can you maintain the positive changes? What are the next steps?

Template for evaluation

Answer these questions:

- What measurable successes have there been?
- What were my feelings/perceptions in each of the four weeks?
- Which of the principles was I able to implement well?
- What did I find difficult to implement?
- What insights have I gained?
- What else can I improve to be successful in the long term and achieve my big weight loss goal?
- My final conclusion on Weight Loss Relaxed

Provide feedback

I am very interested in hearing about your experiences. If you would like, please send me your evaluation of the challenge. Your feedback will help me to further improve my

method and thus be able to help others who want to lose weight even better. Please send me an email to bjoern.rudnik@gmail.com. Thank you very much for your help.

Final words on the challenge

Hang in there! These 30 days are just the beginning of your journey. Be proud of every little success and keep at it. Your new, healthier self is waiting for you.

Chapter 9

Important Insights

In summary, I would like to share with you the most important insights I gained during my weight loss journey.

Not perfect, but still successful

I wasn't always 100% consistent. I feel like I made too many exceptions to the healthy diet described here. About every two weeks, I “rewarded” myself with a kebab or a burger because I had a craving, a ravenous appetite, and a special desire for it. I let myself be talked into having seconds...

But I always found my way back to Weight Loss Relaxed. The day after such an unhealthy exception, I weighed myself and saw that yesterday's burger had added 1.5 kg (3.3 lbs) to the scale today. This made me aware of the direct connection, and I counteracted it by applying my method more strictly again for the next two weeks.

So I was by no means a perfect weight loss candidate! Ultimately, thanks to my motivation, the steady progress I saw, and the perseverance that developed as a result, I still managed to lose 30 kg (66 pounds) without exercise, in a healthy and sustainable way.

My insight: You don't have to be perfect, but you do have to stick with it seriously.

Nutrition is a matter of habit

At first, I also thought, can I really eat so many vegetables and feel full? How am I supposed to drink three liters (101 fl oz) a day when I can barely manage half that?

But my body gradually got used to everything I have described here. It didn't happen overnight. It was a process of small, steady steps and slow increases. Whether it was reducing carbohydrates, eating a vegetable-rich diet, largely giving up alcohol, eliminating sugar, and so on... I managed to do all of this gradually. I tackled these points and my body adjusted and changed accordingly.

My previous cravings for sweets or chips also decreased dramatically. Instead of milk coffee, I now drink coffee almost exclusively "black." I was able to halve my portion sizes. I trained myself out of eating lots of heavy, hearty meals. And I'm still not walking around hungry. My body has learned to restrict itself. It gratefully accepts the new diet and has given me back my normal-looking figure and a weight that makes me feel comfortable in my own skin.

My conclusion: anything is possible when it comes to nutrition. Our bodies are extremely adaptable to new habits.

Motivation and attitude are essential

I also had slumps and sometimes felt disillusioned when the pounds didn't melt away as I had hoped and the scale showed a higher number than the day before. It wasn't easy for me to stick to my diet plan for a whole year, at the end of which I had lost 55 pounds. From conversations with others, I learned that such fluctuations are completely normal.

What kept me going was my tremendous motivation, which came from within myself. My innermost motivators and goals, which I had made myself aware of, prevented me from giving up. Without knowing exactly why I wanted to lose weight and then receiving confirmation through steady, small successes that I

could actually lose weight in this comfortable way, I certainly would not have persevered.

I was also fully aware that I had to change something about my previous diet. To think that I could continue as before and achieve a significant change would have been naive. I was ready for any change that I could agree on with my inner demons. They wouldn't allow regular exercise, but they would allow a consistent change in diet.

I hear many people say that they want to lose weight, but are not willing to give up this or that to do so. My opinion on this is that your desire for change, your dissatisfaction with yourself, and the psychological distress that may be smoldering within you due to your negative body image are probably not strong enough. For me, all of these factors were present...

I often say that you have to know what you want. If you want one thing, you have to accept another in return. Basically, it's quite simple, like basic physics. We can't have everything: feast every day until our bellies are full, without any exercise or balance, and still be slim? I could perhaps do that to some extent as a child and teenager. As an adult, that's not possible. Some form of restriction or additional work in other areas is necessary.

Figure out exactly what you really want. And ask yourself what you are willing to give in return.

My realization: tremendous motivation, coupled with the necessary willingness to change, allows us to master even what seems difficult to achieve.

Getting started is the most important thing

I too was confused by the countless diets that are promoted and didn't find a weight loss method that suited me right away. Several of my attempts to lose weight failed. I sought expert advice, implemented it, exchanged experiences with others, continued to inform myself, tried other approaches... And finally developed “my” method.

I found it important to make a start that motivated me. To stop worrying about whether sunflower oil or rapeseed oil is healthier. I researched the topic and made a decision. I stuck to it and saw success. I no longer allowed myself to make excuses. I concentrated on consistent implementation and simply *did it*.

My insight: put excuses and skepticism aside. Just be consistent and success will follow.

Nutrition is key

I tried working out at the gym, without success. I didn't realize that I needed to change my diet. Everyone kept telling me to exercise more and go to the gym! None of the many good pieces of advice I received recommended that I pay more attention to healthy eating. I only learned this from Nicole, my nutritionist.

Through trial and error, I learned firsthand that nutrition is by far the most important aspect of weight loss. Once I realized this, I met people who agreed with me in conversation. My new opinion, which had matured within me, was that diet accounts for about two-thirds (66%) to about 80% of weight loss success. Today, I can only agree with this.

Eating healthily also makes you feel better. On the one hand, I now have a clearer conscience because I am doing something good for myself and no longer burdening my body with all those unhealthy things. On the other hand, I feel better, seem to have more energy, and am less tired after eating. So not only am I over half a hundred pounds lighter, as measured on the scale, but I also feel fitter and more energetic.

Added to this is my improved self-acceptance, my increased self-confidence, and the better response of those around me to my appearance and my seemingly enormously

increased contented charisma. I feel like a new person. To put it bluntly, compared to my previous, overweight self, I feel like a different person.

My conclusion: a healthy diet can change you as a person.

The easy way works

I couldn't persuade myself to exercise. Chopping and preparing fresh vegetables every day eventually got on my nerves. I couldn't afford expensive ingredients or high-quality ready-made frozen mixes...

I managed without exercise. I managed without fresh vegetables. I did it with the cheapest ingredients the supermarket had to offer. More importantly, I followed the principles I had discovered. My weight loss method, born out of necessity due to my own laziness and inability to overcome my inner demons, combined with my tight budget, actually led me to the success I had been longing for. With minimal effort, I got the most out of my body in this convenient way, “shrinking” it back to a much more attractive silhouette.

And most importantly, I restored my self-image. By that, I don't just mean looking at my much slimmer body in the mirror with a feeling of happiness. I have also significantly increased my self-esteem. I proved to myself that I can achieve it. And now I am much more satisfied and happier with myself and my life. Other people notice this too, as I now seem to radiate it in a way that cannot be overlooked.

My conclusion: it can also be comfortable if the basic concept is right.

Memory effect

My lowest weight, at the end of my weight loss phase, was around 78 kg (172 lbs). Due to my metabolism, I have to continue to eat healthily, otherwise I will gain weight again sooner or later. I have this largely under control.

When I do gain a few unwanted pounds and set out to lose them again, I observe the following effect. My body can now lose weight faster than during my entire continuous weight loss phase. During that phase, I initially lost about 3 kg (6.6 lbs) per month, and later about 1.5 to 2.5 kg (3.3 to 4.4 lbs). Now, when I want to slim down again, my body is able to lose up to twice as much weight in the same amount of time. At least until I reach my previous lowest weight.

It seems that I have now trained my body to lose weight and it has learned how to burn fat effectively. If I want to lose weight again, it can now easily call on this trained ability and help me lose weight twice as fast. Of course, this is also because I now know even better what I need to pay attention to in order to lose weight quickly and effectively.

The discovery of this memory effect surprised me, makes me happy, and makes it much easier for me to return to my feel-good weight.

My conclusion: You can teach your body to lose weight effectively. If necessary, it can recall this ability and be even more effective.

Your body is your best advisor

I have developed a better feeling and understanding for my body. Instead of stuffing myself senselessly, I now notice when I have had enough. I eat more consciously, up to my comfort level. This includes taking enough time for meals, chewing consciously, tasting, and enjoying. This may not always be possible when I'm on the go and in my hectic everyday life, but overall it's getting better and better.

After my weight loss phase and long abstinence from my previously beloved potato chips, I realized that I no longer enjoy them as much as I used to. My taste buds are now more sensitive. Apparently, my taste buds now better recognize the excessive flavor enhancers and additives that I didn't taste before.

Eating too much, i.e., stuffing myself senselessly, no longer makes me happy either. My focus has now shifted to maintaining my weight and eating more consciously. Feeling

good, eating healthily, feeling light, having more energy, and, for example, no longer feeling a noticeable midday slump after a heavy meal, which allows me to be more productive at work—*that's* what makes me happy now!

I now notice my body's signals, such as stomach aches, fatigue, flatulence, constipation, or diarrhea, more clearly and can make the direct connection to a less than ideal diet. If I eat according to my healthy concept, such complaints do not occur.

I also pay more attention to other signs from my body and, for example, actively do something about tension and neck pain with the help of my fascia roller or short stretching exercises.

I have become more aware of the negative influence of stress, which I am now better able to reduce. Good, restful sleep is also an important issue that I now pay more attention to and which I have been able to improve thanks to expert advice.

I have now recognized the underlying holistic connection. Topics such as nutrition, health, fitness, relaxation, and mindfulness are closely intertwined and only lead to feeling good in your own skin when taken together.

My insight: It is important to listen to your body's signals and take good care of it in every way.

Ready for the next level

I am very happy with what I have achieved so far. But I am not quite at the end of my weight loss journey yet. Now I want a little more. With success, my expectations of myself have also risen, so to speak.

I still have a little belly and slight excess fat on my hips and chest. I want to get rid of them and therefore lose another 3-4 kg (6.6 - 8.8 lbs) of fat until I reach about 75 kg (165 lbs) with my height of 1.78 m (5′10″).

In addition, I now want to focus on building muscle and increasing my fitness level.

Now I enjoy exercise more again! With 30 kilos (66 lbs) less, it is now much easier for me. I am also much more flexible now. This makes it much easier for me to motivate myself to do moderate exercise, which I would like to integrate into my daily routine from now on. Now that I am relatively “slim” again, my new goal is to become stronger and more enduring.

My realization: Once you have conquered the biggest bulge, it is easier to overcome your inner demons.

Losing weight is just the beginning

Losing 30 kilos (66 pounds) and regaining my attractive physique are just two of the positive effects. Added to this are my increased self-esteem, my self-affirmation of having achieved something that is very important to me personally, my improved charisma, and the associated more attractive effect I have on other people. Not to mention my physical values and my generally improved state of health. My rediscovered lightness of body, my new vitality and dynamism. Suddenly, things are going better at work, I can see more clearly what I want, I am more motivated to take on other challenges, and I now approach challenging tasks with the feeling that I can master them. With more self-confidence and a more positive attitude. This has a positive influence on my chances of success in other areas of my life from the outset. Even if these other areas of my life don't seem to have anything to do with my weight loss at first glance.

“Seem” is the key word here. Because I have learned how everything is somehow connected. My self-image, self-esteem, self-confidence, well-being, health, satisfaction, self-image, and self-affirmation have a positive influence on me and also have a strong influence on other areas, such as my social contacts, my relationships with my parents, my family, friends, and other people, my professional development, my success, and happiness in life in general.

I can only touch on this topic here to give you a small impression of what successful weight loss has triggered and set in motion for me. And this successful turn for the better in all areas of my life is not yet complete for me.

I had been going through a difficult time for over ten years. Not only was I overweight and unsuccessful in my job and in love, I was also severely depressed, had significant health problems, and stagnated in my development for years. I was simply in a deep hole.

My successful weight loss project was a turning point in my life and initiated a positive change of direction, the effects of which I am experiencing in all important areas of my life.

My realization: Successful weight loss can give your whole life new momentum and contribute to solving other problems and issues in your life.

Chapter 10

Maintain Your Ideal Weight Permanently

Why it is important to maintain your weight permanently

Reaching your ideal weight is a great achievement. But maintaining it permanently is just as important. Why? Quite simply, your body is designed to keep you healthy and strong. A stable weight means less stress on your heart, joints, and metabolism.

In the long term, it minimizes the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Not only will you feel better physically, but you will also feel mentally stronger. But how can you maintain your weight without having to constantly struggle?

Self-confidence and self-acceptance

It all starts here: with you. Your inner attitude plays a decisive role. Do you feel comfortable in your own skin? Do you accept yourself as you are? Self-confidence and self-acceptance are the basis for your success. Imagine you are your own best friend. How would you motivate yourself? Exactly, with loving, encouraging words. Accept that there may be setbacks. They are not a sign of failure, but opportunities from which you can learn and become stronger.

Maintain your eating habits

You have now learned how to eat healthily. The next step is to maintain these habits. Focus on the basic principles of the diet presented in this book, which have helped you lose weight:

- Vegetable-rich meals: Combine vegetables, proteins, and healthy fats.
- Portion control: Listen to your body and eat only until you are full.
- Hydration: Maintain your increased water intake.
- Avoid unhealthy foods: Cut out sweets and alcohol as much as possible.

Plan your meals in advance. This will help you resist temptation and save time. A simple weekly plan can make your everyday life easier and help you avoid stress.

Intermittent fasting as a lifestyle

Intermittent fasting can be more than just a method for losing weight. It can become a lifestyle that helps you maintain your weight and feel better overall. Two key benefits are:

- Better control over hunger: You learn to distinguish between real and emotional hunger.
- Stable blood sugar levels: Reduces the risk of food cravings.

We have previously discussed how to integrate intermittent fasting into your everyday life. Start with simple steps. For example, eat your last meal at 7 p.m. and don't eat breakfast until 9 a.m. Find a time slot that fits your lifestyle.

Dealing with setbacks

Setbacks are normal. Everyone experiences them. The most important thing is how you deal with them. See them as learning opportunities. Imagine you're having a bad day

and reach for sweets. Instead of judging yourself, ask yourself: Why did this happen? What can I do differently next time? Here are some strategies to stay motivated:

- Remember your successes: Write down small and big successes.
- Set realistic goals: Small, achievable goals help you stay motivated.
- Seek support: Friends, family, or online communities can give you support.

Healthy lifestyle in everyday life

A healthy lifestyle goes beyond nutrition. Stress management is a key word here. Stress has a significant impact on your weight. Practice relaxation techniques such as yoga, qigong, or meditation. Getting enough good quality sleep is also essential. Your body regenerates during sleep and regulates the hormones that control hunger.

Light exercise, such as walking, can work wonders. You don't have to train intensively to stay fit. We have learned that every bit of exercise counts and supports your metabolism.

Regular self-reflection and goal setting

Reflect on your progress regularly. Weekly and monthly check-ins can help you stay on track. Ask yourself questions such as: What did I do well this week? Where can I improve? Celebrate your successes, no matter how small they may seem. They are steps on your path to great success.

Develop health awareness

Health is an ongoing process. Regular doctor visits and preventive checkups are important to ensure that everything is in order. Stay informed about your health and get to know your body.

Tips for eating out or in restaurants

You can still make healthy choices when eating out. Check the menu in advance. Choose dishes with lots of vegetables, healthy fats, and proteins. Good preparation can prevent you from falling into the calorie trap.

In addition, you can always make special requests when ordering your food from the service staff. For example, you can ask for a double portion of vegetables and request that the carbohydrate-rich side dishes (such as potatoes, fries, etc.) be omitted. Most restaurants will be happy to accommodate your special requests.

How I maintain my weight long-term

After my very intensive, long weight loss phase, I initially slacked off a bit in strictly following my diet plan. Every now and then, I treated myself to my former favorite dishes such as pasta, paella, kebabs, burgers, fries, ice cream, French cheese with red wine, and potato chips.

I also started eating bread for dinner again, especially when I was visiting my mom, which I had completely given up. So I let myself be influenced by the habits of those around me. After such a long period of weaning myself off certain foods, I felt that this was okay to some extent. But I kept a critical eye on how my body was reacting. And for a while, this went quite well.

After several weeks, I noticed that I was gaining weight again, slowly but steadily, the more I reverted to my old eating habits (before Weight Loss Relaxed). So my weight gradually increased again—half a kilo here, half a kilo there. I noticed this immediately, thanks to my daily weigh-ins and the tightness of my pants, and took countermeasures.

After I had gained about three or four pounds again, the emergency alarm went off and I said to myself: “You're not going to let that happen again! I don't want to ruin my hard-won weight loss!”

So I resumed my stricter diet: vegetable stir-fry, proteins, fats. I had kept the porridge for breakfast for the most part anyway. I also paid closer attention to my eating window and avoided late dinners outside of this window.

And lo and behold, my body remembered the learned ability to lose weight, and I was able to shed the extra pounds relatively easily, as I described earlier in one of my important insights.

So I found a healthy balance for myself between strict nutrition according to my plan and occasional exceptions. Whenever I go overboard again, I immediately take countermeasures and get back on my stricter course.

At first, I allowed myself to gain too much weight again, in some cases six kilos (13 pounds) more. That was *clearly* too much for me! However, I learned to restrict myself and set my personal weight limit more strictly.

This way, I can live with it and my weight only fluctuates within a reasonable range. Two or three kilos up. Alarm bells! I take countermeasures: two or three kilos down.

So I have maintained a certain amount of self-discipline. The keywords here are discipline, but also self-love and flexibility. I have learned to listen to my body and give it what it needs. For me, that is the key to a healthy, happy life.

The most important things in brief

Self-confidence and self-acceptance

- Without self-love and acceptance, lasting success is difficult. You have to motivate and accept yourself in order to be successful in the long term.

Maintain healthy eating habits

- The right eating habits are the foundation for long-term success. Focus on healthy meals, portion control, and plenty of vegetables, proteins, and fats, as learned here.

Dealing with setbacks

- Setbacks are normal. Dealing with them correctly is crucial. Learn from your mistakes, set realistic new goals for yourself again and again, and seek support when you need it.

Social support

- A strong network can work wonders. Family, friends, and online communities offer support and motivation.

Regular health care

- Regular doctor visits and preventive checkups are important. Take care of your body by reducing stress, getting enough sleep, and paying attention to your health.

Chapter 11

My Life After Weight Loss Relaxed

Yes! I was 30 kilos (66 pounds) lighter! What a success for me...

At first, I still had the thought that I wasn't completely satisfied. But I was super proud of myself for what I had achieved. I was slowly able to let go of my dissatisfaction with myself and my self-critical attitude. My self-confidence grew at the same rate. And I developed an even higher opinion of myself. My self-love increased enormously.

I could finally wear clothes again that I felt comfortable in and found myself attractive in—even those from my favorite fashion brands. In photos, I could now smile as carefree as I seemed to have forgotten how to do during the long, dark years I had gone through. And I actually felt this smile inside, instead of inner emptiness. (A good example of this is the "after" photo of me on the back cover of this book.) My face no longer looked like that of a fat person with a double chin. It was now slim and had distinctive contours again.

I felt the increasingly positive response from people on the street. My change may not have been immediately obvious to those closest to me, as it happened slowly and they saw me too often to notice every pound I lost.

Other people I told about my weight loss success showed me respect. It turned out that many of them had also made several attempts to lose weight. This made it easy to strike up a conversation, and I learned a lot more about these people's experiences. I also

learned that many of them had been successful using some of the principles I had discovered. Many of these people also found my book idea, Losing Weight the Easy Way, appealing, which strengthened my motivation to write the book.

The weight loss success was a big deal for me. But not all of my other "problems" were solved as a result. Of course not! On the contrary: my life continued to present me with all its challenges, which I would like to outline as briefly as possible here for your better understanding.

My unfinished projects and other experiences

- There was my still unfinished career change process.
- The never-ending preparations for my self-employment.
- I was slimmer, but I hadn't automatically turned into a sports fanatic.
- My grandmother died before I achieved my big weight loss success, when I still weighed over 90 kilos (198 pounds).
- In Hanover, I met a woman named Tatjana, who is devoted to her faith in God and has since become a good friend of mine. She was able to cure my frequent headaches with a powerful prayer, without me having to share her faith.
- Through her, I met missionaries who travel throughout Europe to help people. I took part in one of their "workshops." Through their connection to God, they were able to compensate for a slight difference in the length of my legs, among other things, and I actually felt a tingling sensation in one leg and my stance felt more level afterwards.
- This did not immediately turn me into a believer, but I did learn that there is a higher power that can influence our lives. I understand and respect that many people find support and community in such faith communities. Primarily, I continue to believe in my own strengths and abilities. However, I now clearly notice how the universe noticeably supports me here and there when I actively move forward.
- The sudden death of my stepfather, whom I basically only had three or four days to say goodbye to, took a toll on me.

- Shortly before his death, he revealed to me that my mother had serious health problems. His last words to me as he was being carried away on the stretcher were, “Then take good care of your mother.”
- For the next four months, I provided intensive support to my mother during the acute phase of grief. I also took care of the nerve-wracking and time-consuming applications for my mother's widow's pension and housing allowance.
- At some point, it all became too much for me, and I developed mental health problems myself. I was also no longer able to concentrate on my plans to become self-employed.
- I found immediate help at a psychiatric day clinic and was able to overcome my feelings of being overwhelmed and find a solution to the inheritance dispute between my mother and my stepsisters, which brought great relief to both my mother and me.
- While still in the day clinic, I applied for rehabilitation for myself, but after my successful stay in the day clinic, I questioned the usefulness of this rehabilitation, which had now been approved.
- I started the rehabilitation, and it was a complete success, much more than I could ever have imagined.

My huge rehabilitation success

The five-week psychosomatic rehabilitation program I completed in Thuringia was a huge success that I never thought possible. I learned a lot about myself and how well I get along with other people. I also realized that other people have similar, sometimes much more serious problems than I do, which helped me to better understand my own challenges and recognize that many of them are simply tasks that I have to complete and not real problems for which I have no solution.

My most important insights in detail were these...

Rehabilitation insights

1. More intensive fitness training leads to visible results in a short time, both on the scales and in terms of muscle mass.
2. When it comes to socializing, I want to be even more open and uninhibited in the future, as most people are very well disposed towards me.
3. The more I communicate my thoughts and feelings to those around me, the more I get back from them. And the more favorable things turn out and opportunities open up for me. This enables me to positively influence my success and happiness in life through my own behavior, almost at will.
4. You can know a lot, but still sometimes lose sight of the big picture. That's why you should seek regular exchange with others.
5. Traumas and negative experiences from the past accompany us until we actively process them, preferably with professional help. (In this case, in particular: my parents' separation when I was 12 years old.)
6. It is not enough to know that I enjoy activity/hobby XYZ. I also have to do these things regularly in order to derive joy, strength, and relaxation from them and to be able to do myself good.

Instead of trying to force happiness with determination, I can achieve it much more easily by taking a more relaxed approach, letting things happen around me, and perceiving and accepting them as secret supporters. (When I'm in the flow, the universe is on my side and many things happen almost magically, in my favor.)

Rehab conclusion

Here is my final conclusion about my rehab, which I posted on Klinikbewertungen.de:

"A real spark for the rest of my life... My 5-week stay at the Burg-Klinik in Stadtlengsfeld was a complete success! Although I thought before rehab that I was doing quite well and had overcome my biggest challenges, it turned out that I still had a lot of experiences from the past to work through. I was aware of these things, but now something has "clicked" and blockages have been released. I now see my future path more clearly, am full of energy, and can make a fresh start.

Many factors contributed to the success of my rehabilitation. Whether it was the beautiful landscape, nature, the old castle, the friendly and competent therapists, doctors, and staff, meeting lovely people with similar issues to mine, or the great excursions and optional additional events. Even if not everything worked 100% of the time, everyone mentioned showed full commitment and worked hard for me and to find solutions.

It was important that I was open to all offers, accepted all therapies, tried them without reservation, and participated consciously. I talked to therapists and internalized the methods better, so that they had an unexpected effect on me. Other participants did not have as much success as I did, as I learned. This clearly shows that your own attitude is crucial to success—you have to be ready for change—and I was! I didn't complain about trivialities, but actively worked towards my rehabilitation success, which paid off enormously.

Special thanks go to my therapist, who managed to shake me up and get me back on track. A big thank you to her and everyone else involved!

I can recommend this clinic with a clear conscience."

As you can probably tell, this rehab helped me enormously. After losing 25 kilos (55 pounds) to date, it was the second important milestone on the way to my breakthrough. Anyone who wants to change their life and is looking for help should consider this option.

After this rehab, things really took off for me.

My changes after rehab

In the six months since the end of rehab, this is how things have gone for me.

- I now have a clearer vision of my path to successful self-employment. I have revised my business plan, obtained a viability certificate for my business idea from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and been granted a start-up subsidy from the job center.

- I sold my mother's garden, which I had been trying unsuccessfully to manage from Magdeburg since my stepfather's death. This removes a considerable burden for me, which always caused me grief because I was overwhelmed by it.
- I obtained a business license from the city of Magdeburg and officially started my own business on May 1, 2024.
- Since then, I have been in a better mood than I have been in 10 years. I have been able to resolve or eliminate everything that had been weighing on me.
- First thing in the morning, after getting up, I sing cheerful songs. I hum to myself, walk through the streets with a spring in my step and much more energy and enthusiasm – and I stand up straighter too.
- Instead of walking around like a sleeping pill or an introverted sad sack, I now go through life as a relaxed, friendly, confident man with all doors open to me.
- I bought myself a great, simple and elegant summer jacket and a pair of fine fabric trousers, which I can now wear again without my belly bulging over them and pushing everything down.
- After two weeks of sticking more strictly to my tried-and-tested diet plan, I was able to tighten my new belt by two holes.
- I bought a fitness app for half the annual price, which I want to use to establish a regular fitness routine, combat my remaining belly fat, and become more muscular overall.
- Since completing rehab, I've had 13 dates in 7 months, compared to 5 or 6 dates in the whole year in previous years.
- When I go out smiling, all the women smile back at me. It's a real explosion of positive feedback that I'm now experiencing. This is completely new to me. I enjoy it, but sometimes the attention is too much for me. Since I've been rather quiet and reserved for 43 years, I first have to learn how to deal with it.
- Now I find it much easier to strike up conversations with people, especially women. Even very pretty women, whom I would never have dared to approach in the past, now send me nonverbal invitations to talk through their smiles, facial expressions, and gestures.

- I realized that I no longer need the emotional roller coaster, wasted time, and frustration that online dating brings. I've uninstalled most of these apps and now only use three or four that have proven to be quite good. However, I no longer take it as seriously and doggedly as I did until recently, but let it run quite relaxed on the side.
- I've noticed that my life takes place outside, in the city and at events. It's great to strike up conversations with women directly. Of course, it's very rare that this leads to a lasting relationship. But communicating, flirting, learning new things, and laughing together gives me enormous pleasure.
- I don't have a steady partner yet. But I'll find one. And until then, I'm enjoying my newly discovered life in a relaxed and carefree manner.

My conclusion

My weight loss journey and the success I achieved marked an extremely important turning point in my life. It was the starting point for a wonderful development in all areas of my life. Even now, around four years after my weight loss success, this positive change is still in full swing and not yet complete.

The most important thing is that I am now making progress in life again, instead of stagnating or even falling behind. Instead of being mainly preoccupied with managing my misery, I am now pushing ahead with my new start every day. The leaps forward I am making are so enormous that it is as if I were wearing seven-league boots like a character from a fairy tale. Of course, I cannot say how things would have turned out for me without my weight loss. But I very much doubt that my life would have changed at such a pace, so radically, to such an extent and to such an enormous degree.

The weight loss phase gave me the most formative sense of achievement in my life over the last 10 years and put me on track for my big breakthrough in terms of success, happiness, and satisfaction, which I now seem to be approaching inexorably. I carry deep inside me the inspiring feeling that the world is now at my feet... and everything is in my hands.

I have now found the set of keys to open the most important locks in my life, which I had misplaced somewhere in Vienna about 10 years ago in one of the hectically packed moving boxes. Over the last few years, several keys have been added. Now I am able to use each of the keys to open a secret drawer of my big treasure chest called life and gradually discover every secret hidden inside.

I am the driving force in my life. *I* determine my path.

I'm back in the pilot's seat, at the controls.

It doesn't matter whether I'm flying a motor glider, a Cessna, or a jet.

The main thing is that I'm flying.

“Dream. Do. Achieve.” – my little motto for happiness for years.

I dream. I do. I (will) achieve.

Chapter 12

You Can Do It Too!

First of all, a big thank you for making it this far. Thank you for taking an interest in my weight loss method, listening carefully to everything I had to say, and allowing me to spend quite a while with you.

How are you feeling after this flood of information? How did you take in the tips?

Are you thinking, “Great, that sounds fantastic! I want to start right away...” Then go for it, nothing and no one can stop you. Embark on your own weight loss journey!

Or are you having thoughts like...

- “Hmm, sounds good, *but*... I have these doubts...”
- “It definitely won't work for me...”
- “I can't imagine that I'll be able to stick with it...”
- “But I heard *this* and I don't think it works *that* way...”

All these reactions are normal and perfectly acceptable. I had similar doubts myself. There's just one problem with thoughts like these: they hold you back, keep you stuck in your current dissatisfaction, and don't bring you any closer to your goal of losing weight.

What do you have to lose? Weigh up the pros and cons objectively.

- Sure, you could fail.
- It could turn out that my method doesn't work for you.
- You could be disappointed once again by an unsuccessful attempt to lose weight.
- Could anything worse happen? Just add it here...

On the other hand, what could you gain if it actually works for you?

- A slimmer figure
- A new attitude towards life
- Positive confirmation that you have achieved something great for yourself
- New courage and enthusiasm for other challenges
- A new lightness that allows you to go through life with more energy and vitality
- A more positive charisma and increased impact on other people
- You could meet new people who are drawn to you like a magnet
- Blockages could be released and things could go better at work
- You could approach everything you do with a more positive attitude, which in turn increases your chances of success
- And you wouldn't have wasted the money you invested in this book, but actually invested in yourself and your health

This is just one example of how a comparison of arguments might look. Which of the two previous lists would have more weight and a greater influence on your life is a decision you must make for yourself.

I can only try to encourage you by describing what I have experienced—and which beliefs have become firmly established in me as a result.

I, too, was skeptical, critical, confused, didn't know where to start, failed several times, and was left frustrated.

How did I resolve the situation?

I sought help, obtained expert advice, exchanged ideas, gathered more information, simply did it, tried it out, took action, tried something, adjusted my strategy, optimized it, found a way, worked for my success, and essentially forced my luck. Or, to put it more nicely, I gave it a helping hand.

There it is again, that little word “luck.” Was I just lucky? Certainly not. I took action, proactively approached the solution to my problem—and somehow the circumstances turned out in my favor.

I had to look up the exact meaning of “proactive” again because I was using the word more intuitively without knowing its exact definition:

proactive – determining the course of events and bringing about a situation through differentiated advance planning and goal-oriented action (“acting proactively”)

Sounds great, doesn't it?

I have proven that I can achieve a goal that is important to me, one that many people consider difficult to achieve. Now I feel confirmed in my self-image, which I already had before—during my time when I was very overweight, and actually always—that I can achieve anything I can imagine. Anything I desire.

My new motto in life, “They succeed because they think they can,” is therefore no coincidence. In other words: They are successful because they think (in the sense of believing) that they can do it.

Let me rephrase that as...

“We are successful because we think we can do it.”

But only if we tackle things and actively pursue them.

In short, you could say...

We can. If we do.

So, let's just *do* it.

You do it. For *yourself*.

You have to get the ball rolling. *You* have to be the driving force. Your own driving force.

In an English-language book that I've lost track of, I once read a quote that still lingers in my mind and has had a lasting impact on my actions. It went something like this...

“You are the sum, the result of your daily actions/activities.”

I found this quote in German...

“Life is the sum of all our decisions.”

If you read the previous quote, translated from English, and follow my train of thought so far, you will quickly realize that this German version falls short. It does represent the important core of the topic, but to be more accurate, we should say...

“Our life is the sum of all our decisions and daily activities.”

Both must come together: the decisions as the basis on which we set the direction for our lives – and the activities by which we put the decisions we have made into practice and move in the desired direction.

If you want to check whether you are still on the right track to achieve your goals, or if you are stagnating and don't know how to proceed, remind yourself of your goals and take a close look at your daily activities. Are you really taking all the small, necessary steps every day to get closer to your big goal, indeed to your happiness?

I would like to leave it at that.

Keep moving. And you will always make progress.

My wish for you

I have now nudged you. Perhaps opened your eyes a little.

Go and put it into practice.

That is my simple wish for you:

Please give my method the chance to change your life too.

You will mainly have to implement it on your own.

But we have discussed how you can find allies.

I believe in you! Your success lies deep within you. You just have to make it happen. And first, put aside all the prejudices, skepticism, and doubts that are holding you back. Then the path to success will be clear. And your true power can come to light.

We are all capable of much more than we often give ourselves credit for. You too. Give it a try...

I wish you every success on your journey and all the best!

May you too reap at least some of the rewards that my weight loss has brought me.

Warm regards

Björn Rudnik