

You Are What You Eat

July 21, 2015 | 69 upvotes | by [Redneck001](#)

TL;DR: Count your calories, get lean, wear a life jacket because you're drowning in pussy.

I don't contribute much original content. But I see a reoccurring theme. LIFT, LIFT, LIFT! Great advice, and an important thing you need to do to change the way you look. But there's a bigger piece of the puzzle: what you eat. And it doesn't get a lot of relative attention.

I'm not going to rehash any lifting advice. /u/sepean nailed it in this [post](#), in my opinion. Lifting is important, but nutrition is the key that many guys are missing.

I'm no nutritionist, personal trainer, PhD, etc. I'm a 49 year old dude that's 6'3", 195 lbs, and currently 9% bodyfat. So take this post with a grain of salt and shot of tequila. Or pour some good whiskey over ice and read this while you sip it.

Let me let you in on my worldview. I see fat creatures. Everywhere. Fat girls, fat guys, fat kids, fat dogs, fat cats. A first-world issue for sure. The majority of the first-world is fat, and can't seem to get a handle on their weight, their fat, their health. Because they eat like shit.

But what if you could completely control your weight? Your look? Your progress at the gym? Would that make your life easier? I mean, the one thing that the vast majority of people have no control over, you can control. Easily.

So you're sitting here reading this, and you're thinking, "I'm in pretty good shape." Well, "pretty good shape" is fine, if you're OK with it. But the truth is, you're a fat fuck. But what if you walked through life, and 99% of the time, you are the most fit, most shredded dude around, regardless of your age?

Get a grip on what you're eating.

First and foremost, you need to develop some objectives (goals are broad statements of direction, like "Get ripped/shredded"; objectives are measurable, like "Be 10% bodyfat").

So you want to "get shredded?" What does that mean? In my mind, that means you carry very little body fat, there are veins running all over your body, and you have visible unflexed abs and an Adonis belt (much more impressive than a necktie, and serves the same purpose of drawing attention to your business). Women will say stuff like "I don't like muscular dudes," or "I like a Dad Bod." That's just insecurity and hamstering. Watch what they do.

I've been 20%, 15%, 12%, 10%, and 7% bodyfat. At 15%, I became visible to hot women. At 12%, hot women were smiling at me and initiating conversation. At 10%, I would get complimented on my body at

least once per week by strangers. At 7%, I was getting swolested by the neighborhood women, touching me, begging me to take my shirt off. They were begging me in front of my wife. So you know how that turned out.

You owe it to yourself to get lean. You're making all these other improvements, but still a fat fuck at 15%? Own your shit.

When you're lean, people treat you differently. At less than 10%, you become a special snowflake. Or, more accurately, a snowflake with "angles." And I'm 49 years old. So imagine what some of you younger guys can pull off.

So lean the fuck out.

Let's start with downloading MyFitnessPal, because you're going to count what you eat. And don't half-ass it. Count everything. Because you need to know how many calories you're consuming.

You'll need a [food scale](#), and a good digital bathroom scale.

Now, its time to find your Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE). This is how many calories you burn in a day, including your basic functions and activities. Find an online calculator. It doesn't matter which one you choose; you're just using the number it spits out one time. If you're cutting, pick 'Sedentary' as your activity level. Let's say you're 6'3" and 200 lbs and the calculator spits out 2,500.

So you want to lose weight. One pound equals 3,500 calories. So you'll need to consume 3,500 calories less than your TDEE to lose 1 lb. Simple enough, right?

Now, track your weight every morning when you get up. And record it. I like to make a spreadsheet for my weight and my calories, so I can create a moving average for my weight, and add up my calories for the week. Do this for at least 3 weeks, don't worry about the fluctuations that you see (yet). You're losing water weight, retaining water, depleting glycogen, etc. Lots of shit going on the first few weeks.

I like to create a 7-day moving average of my weight. I also figure out my weight loss or gain weekly, usually on Sunday. Just subtract this Sunday's average weight from last Sunday's average weight. And I like to add up my weekly calorie total and divide by 7; this tells me how many calories I averaged. I usually average my calories on Sunday, but it doesn't matter when you average them.

Miss a day of weighing yourself? Just put the previous day's weight down. Miss a day of counting your calories? No problem, divide by 6 instead of 7 at week's end.

By keeping up with your moving average of your weight and how many calories you're consuming in any given week, you can easily determine what your true TDEE is, compared to the number you started with.

How much should you lose and how fast? Good guidelines to help preserve your strength are:

- 18-19% body fat: -1.7 lb/week
- 15-17% body fat: -1.5 lb/week
- 12-14%: -1.3 lb/week
- 9-11%: -1 lb/week
- <8%: 0.7 lb/week

When leaning out, you can do a straight cut or you can cycle your carbs/calories. A straight cut is easiest and its literally impossible to fuck it up. You just eat this number. Every day. The downsides are that you wind up eating the same thing every day. And once you get into the “lean” territory, you may run into unwanted side effects if cutting for an extended period. For example, I did a straight cut once and when I got down to 10%, my immune system quit and so did my sex drive. That sucked.

So now, I cycle carbs/calories, because I can add variety to my diet and I can avoid most of the unwanted side effects. You can try both, and see which is easier to adhere to.

OK, so you’ve figured out your objective, you have your daily calorie number to reach your objective. So what should you eat? My advice is to pick your favorite foods, because you’ll find that you eat the same things over and over, mainly because they hit your numbers.

Get lean, get laid. Womenz be crazy over a lean, shredded man.

Archived from theredarchive.com

Comments

[deleted] • 4 points • 21 July, 2015 07:06 PM*

Great write up and reminder. The only thing I'd add is something you touched on in the beginning, drinking.

grain of salt and shot of tequila. Or pour some good whiskey over ice and read this while you sip it.

When I'm looking to get to a single digit bf% I switched to tequila, clear tequila to be specific and I'd pour that with some lime and a splash of gingerale/sprite.

I'd drink that and I'd be the dude who brought the fucking veggie platter. Everybody would be demolishing doritos and celeste pizzas, I'd be at the table trying to maintain composure and fucking up all of the carrots, lettuce cucumbers, and broccoli.

You have no idea how many calories you consume through beer, or rum & cokes, and then on top of that you get the munchies and before you know it you're fucking up your entire weeks workouts in one night.

Then, the next day you don't make yourself run, you choose to sleep in and then *that* day is wasted.

Drink like a Man. It's cool to get drunk from time to time, but it's never cool to get sloppy.

Redneck001[S] • 5 points • 21 July, 2015 07:17 PM

I may lose my Man Card, but my cutting beer of choice is Michelob Ultra, at 90 kcals per bottle.

And personally, I just can't get pizza to fit with my goals, regardless if I'm cutting, maintaining, or bulking, so I just don't eat it any more.

[deleted] • 5 points • 21 July, 2015 07:21 PM

As long as you own the fuck out of it, you can rock any fucking beer you want.

What's even better is when you are drinking those michelob Ultra's and some dude talks shit while drinking his guinness and you just lift the shirt and show the abs, then talk about how you're cutting. The bitches will start telling you how they lift and all sorts of shit.

The beer doesn't make the Man, the Man makes the beer.

[deleted] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 12:12 PM

guinness is pretty low calorie. the can is only 110 cals, not much more than a light beer

[deleted] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 12:16 PM

I know, it was a bad example.

I was thinking more of the typical Guinness drinker as opposed to the drink.

[deleted] • 2 points • 22 July, 2015 12:17 PM

I tend to pick on their chicken wings more than their beer selection, but I feel ya

[deleted] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 02:59 AM

Nothing wrong with mick ultra. Especially if you're gonna have a few. Better than Bud or Coors, fewer calories than coke.

Let's supplement this info with percentages.

For Bulking:

40-60% Carbs
25-35% Protein
15-25% Fat

For Maintenance:

30-50% Carbs
25-35% Protein
25-35% Fat

For Cutting:

10-30% Carbs
40-50% Protein
30-40% Fat

Use a TDEE calculator to find your calorie needs. I'm 6'1" 186lb. I take in about 3000 calories a day which gains me weight steadily. I don't use apps to calculate macros because when I get my hands into it myself, and calculate it myself I learn more about myself and what I'm eating. I also weight myself daily, graph my dailies, graph my weekly averages, and plot my trendlines. I like statistics, so this is "fun" for me. But, more importantly it lets me see how fast I'm gaining... too fast and I decrease my TDEE a bit... too slow and I increase.

I will cut a full 2000 calories out a day when I cut. I do this amount because *I can*. YMMV.

1. When bulking, your body needs carbs to build and increase muscle mass. Calories = carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. These are the fundamental elements for building cells.
2. When cutting, your body will burn fat faster from the caloric deficit. The low carb percentage prevents insulin spikes for fat storage and the high protein percentage replaces the carb calories.

<http://www.bodybuilding.com/fun/macro-math-3-keys-to-dialing-in-your-macro-ratios.html>

Renaissance__Man • 1 point • 28 October, 2015 07:00 PM*

I will cut a full 2000 calories out a day when I cut.

Wait—seriously? I don't have hunger/food addiction issues so this sounds like a dream (especially to my wallet), but wouldn't such a harsh calorie deficit eat your muscles away/put your body in a catabolic state like crazy? (I'm 28 if that means anything) The more I read on this issue, the more confused I get as there seems to be opposing extremes fighting each other.

I assume by 'cutting out' you mean $3000^{TDEE} - 2000 = 1000\text{kcal}$ consumed. Right now I'm doing $3,550^{TDFEE} - 800 = 2750\text{kcal}$ consumed and I appear to be losing fat and gaining muscle and a reasonable rate, probably because I'm still new doing 5x5 and there's quite a few months ahead of me on the strength path.

Anyway thanks for linking the macro spread for the 3 diets, I had been adhering to general advice that looked nothing like that.

Totally with you on the statistics being fun, I have my own chart in Google Sheets and it's... comprehensive to say the least. Really want to make sure I'm looking at objective data instead of feelz.

EDIT: Just saw this was an old post - I was linked from this current thread.

RPAlternate42 • 1 point • 28 October, 2015 07:32 PM*

I can't do it for long... A couple of days max, and rarely.

Catabolization happens at that deficit, but it happens when you sleep too. Resistance training curbs it and high protein diets curb it too.

I usually cut hard for a day or two and then carb cycle down.

I don't recommend more than a strict 20% calorie cut for any appreciable amount for an appreciable amount of time. It starts to affect my concentration after a week... YMMV.

Renaissance__Man • 1 point • 28 October, 2015 08:07 PM

Alright make sense, looks like I have an opportunity to essentially fast/eat only what's given me for one day on the weekends. That's my definition of a 'cheat day'. I know I don't want to be cutting that hard when I'm working out or the day after when I should be nourishing that repair and growth.

BTW if you want to stop catabolization at night I can sum up this poorly written article in one sentence: eat cottage cheese before bed. He claims it has the same 'slow release' function as all these crazy expensive protein supplements. On sale I can get that stuff for 90 cents a tub (440kcal, 48g protein)

RPAlternate42 • 3 points • 28 October, 2015 09:16 PM

Look up "intermittent fasting" too. There are health benefits to fasting for short lengths of time.

Renaissance__Man • 1 point • 28 October, 2015 10:03 PM

Alright, thanks. I've been seeing that thrown around.

dandar4600 • 2 points • 21 July, 2015 07:32 PM

I was at a birthday party this weekend. Last year I would have been the fattest guy there. This Sunday at just under 15% body fat I was the leanest.

My goal is 10% before going on a clean bulk cycle. To do that I too use My Fitness Pal. In the app there is a progress part where you can enter your weight which gives you a nice graph you can track.

I eat whatever I want as long as it fits my macros of about 40-50% carbs, 30% fat, 30% protein. Having said that it turns out mostly to be lean meats, veggies, eggs, yogurt and fruits. I drink water or black coffee. Sometimes I will add non-fat milk to my coffee which is about 20-25 calories.

I take a scoop of protein about 5 times a week and multivitamin, fish oil and joint supplements about 4-5 times a week. I cheat on weekends. This Sunday I had 3200 calories where normally I don't go above 1500. Yeah, summers are tough. Still I'm losing about a pound a week so no worries, I'll get there before Fall is over.

Redneck001[S] • 2 points • 21 July, 2015 07:36 PM*

Great job!

My advice is, if your goal is 10%, cut deeper. Because when you re-introduce a regular amount of carbs into your diet when you go to your maintenance/lean bulk numbers, you're going to put on ~5 lbs of water/glycogen/stuff I can't pronounce. So if I wanted to stay ~10%, I'd probably consider leaning down to 8.5%, so the rebound in weight will take me back to 10%. Good job, though!

Imagine how you're going to stand out from the herd when you reach your goal. Do it, bro.

generic_name • 2 points • 21 July, 2015 07:40 PM

So what should you eat? My advice is to pick your favorite foods, because you'll find that you eat the same things over and over, mainly because they hit your numbers.

One thing that's helped me a ton in losing weight is to try to get at least 4-6 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. A serving being either 1/2 a cup of veggies/fruit or 1 cup of leafy vegetables like lettuce or kale. It's a lot easier to feel full after eating 4 cups of lettuce than it is to eat 1/2 cup of rice, and the lettuce is way lower calorie with a generally better nutritional profile. And proper nutrition is important, because getting the right nutrients will help your body to produce more testosterone.

The first few days of eating a high fiber diet will definitely do a number on your stomach if you're used to processed garbage, but eventually the bacteria in your digestive track will adjust and you'll be fine.

mrpCamper • 2 points • 21 July, 2015 09:31 PM

Great post bro. All totally true. I've been dropping pounds like a fiend. I was using My fitness pal but switched to the fit bit app when I got one of those. I then put the daily weight into excel like you do and track a 7 day average like you do. Seems to be a good way to measure since the weight does fluctuate day to day so much. 5'10 165 right now. need to lose a few more pounds to get where I want and then may bulk. Get down to a Justin Theroux body then bulk it from there. <http://dailym.ai/1gN01Ek>. I'm tracking my calories down to every berry in my oatmeal in the morning. 1500 to 1600 calories a day.

Just remember that everyone is a little different. If having an extra 50 calories means you won't cheat later on in the day then that weird exception is right for you. Low calorie beer of choice for me is Becks Light. 64 calories for a 12 oz bottle.

Redneck001[S] • 1 point • 21 July, 2015 10:43 PM

Gonna check out the Becks. Thanks!

You're right, everyone is different. Looking back over data, I have a summer and winter TDEE that differs by 150 cal/day. I need less food September - February, and more food March - August. Go figure.

I'm tracking my calories down to every berry in my oatmeal in the morning. 1500 to 1600 calories a day.

Good job on owning your shit!

suddenlytrp • 1 point • 25 July, 2015 02:52 PM

Craft beer drinker checking in. I'm currently cutting. This is my session beer of choice, though it is expensive:

Evil Twin Bikini Beer

81 calories, 2.7 % ABV

mrpCamper • 1 point • 27 July, 2015 01:38 PM

Nice addition. I'll look for it. Thanks.

ElGuapoMiguel • 1 point • 21 July, 2015 07:45 PM

Thanks. Great info, I'm in a cut right now with the goal of under 10% bf, currently at 14%. I have been doing low carb and IF with some results. I think after reading this I am going to need to count carbs. And I do freak out about losing muscle mass. Lol!

ElGuapoMiguel • 1 point • 21 July, 2015 07:45 PM

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spexer • 1 point • 21 July, 2015 08:07 PM

question for you: I want to lose weight but I dont want to sacrifice my muscles, or handicap the 4 days a week weightlifting I am doing.

It is one or the other, or is there a way to lose weight and bulk up at the same time?

of note - in about 10 days I will start taking testosterone injections.

Redneck001[S] • 1 point • 21 July, 2015 08:15 PM

I will start taking testosterone injections

Depending on the dosage, that's about the only way you're going to gain muscle and lose weight at the same time.

I'm guessing you've been lifting regularly for a while, so you'll have to cut and bulk in cycles. Yes, pick one or the other.

Particular workout programs aren't the subject of this post, but as far as not wanting to lose your strength and/or muscle mass on a cut, I like using Reverse Pyramid Training (the one endorsed over at LeanGains) for cuts. Its low volume, high intensity, and once a week for each muscle group, so you maintain the majority of your muscle mass with your reduced recovery ability.

For me, I lose ~1-2% of my strength on a 4 week cut. Some folks make strength gains on a cut. You'll have to see how your body reacts to the calorie deficit.

ZeeyardSA • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 05:36 AM

and here I am guzzling food to get get bigger...

Redneck001[S] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 12:18 PM

If you're already very lean, its time to bulk. If you haven't reached your lean goal, ...

When you reach your goal, eat your maintenance for a couple of weeks. Then slowly add calories back. I'd start with a small surplus of 150 calories/day and try that for a few weeks. If your lifts go up, then stick to the small surplus.

If you start to plateau on your lifts, bump your calories up another 100/day. Consider eating only enough to make progress. No sense in throwing on a bunch of unnecessary fat after getting to your lean state.

Good luck, dude. And good job.

N_the_U • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 06:12 AM

Does anyone have anyone have advice on the best way to check body fat percentage?

Today I took all my measurements and plugged them into 5 different online calculators and got 5 different results within a 5 point spread. I don't want to fuck around with shoddy calculations and I don't want to spend a lot of money at the moment. Is getting a calipers my best option here, or do you guys know of other ways?

kurwazinho • 2 points • 22 July, 2015 07:58 AM

Calipers are cheap and a good way to measure progress. There is a good body-fat-calculator webpage with various calculation methods here. The different methods will give different results, probably also within a 5 point spread, but an average BF% of all these methods should give you a pretty accurate reading.

[deleted] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 12:14 PM

their accuracy is horrible. calipers can be off by +10%. their benefit is in consistency, gains over time.
the electrode pads are better, but still pretty bad. the only one that works is immersion, and universities might let you use it, but it's not cheap
they are good for relative progress, not absolute by any means

Redneck001[S] • 2 points • 22 July, 2015 10:19 AM

I get my gym owner to pinch me every few months. Not the most accurate, and his measurements typically come out higher than I think I am, but it gives me a baseline to work from. There are more accurate and expensive methods (dexa, hydro), but I'm cheap and the calipers give me a good idea. In my experience, the leaner, the more accurate the calipers are.

I would average your 5 different results.

santander26 • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 08:39 AM

Perfect. I have to lose 15 kg(about 30 lbs). I already lost 5 kg. I am lifting, running, dieting. Thanks man.

[deleted] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 10:39 AM

Fucking great post. You motivated me to finally drop the last ten or so pounds I need to start really showing off my abs.

Redneck001[S] • 2 points • 22 July, 2015 12:24 PM

Then do it, dude.

There's plenty more that can be said about the social aspects of being a shredded dude. /u/IanIronwood mentions how males choose default group leaders in a recent post. That shit is true, and when you're the leanest in the group, dudes just defer AMOG status to you until you lose it. You don't even have to do much except just show up and people defer to you. The social proof is unreal.

[deleted] • 1 point • 22 July, 2015 11:10 PM

How do I deal with hunger?

Redneck001[S] • 2 points • 22 July, 2015 11:16 PM*

Own it.

edit: Chad's hungry when he cuts. He owns it. Become one with the Chadness (trademark courtesy of /u/marxistbacon).

victi_vicimus • 0 points • 21 July, 2015 07:28 PM

What he said!