

# **Choosing a Diet That Really Works**

**Prepared for**

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**August 4, 2002**

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August 4, 2002

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Dear Dr. Brucker:

The following research report was written in order to fulfill the requirements of assignment number fourteen in the English 2053 Technical Communications course. The topic I have written about is choosing a diet that really works. Having been diagnosed with high blood pressure, and with a history of heart disease in my family, I felt that this would be a good opportunity to research different diet plans so that I may choose one to begin losing the excess weight that my doctor has strongly recommended that I lose.

With there being so many diet plans available today, I chose to focus on only a few of the more popular ones. From the research presented, a potential dieter should be able to make an informed decision about the type of diet plan that could be followed to help shed excess pounds and lead to a healthier life style.

Sincerely,

Earl Kirtley

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## **Abstract**

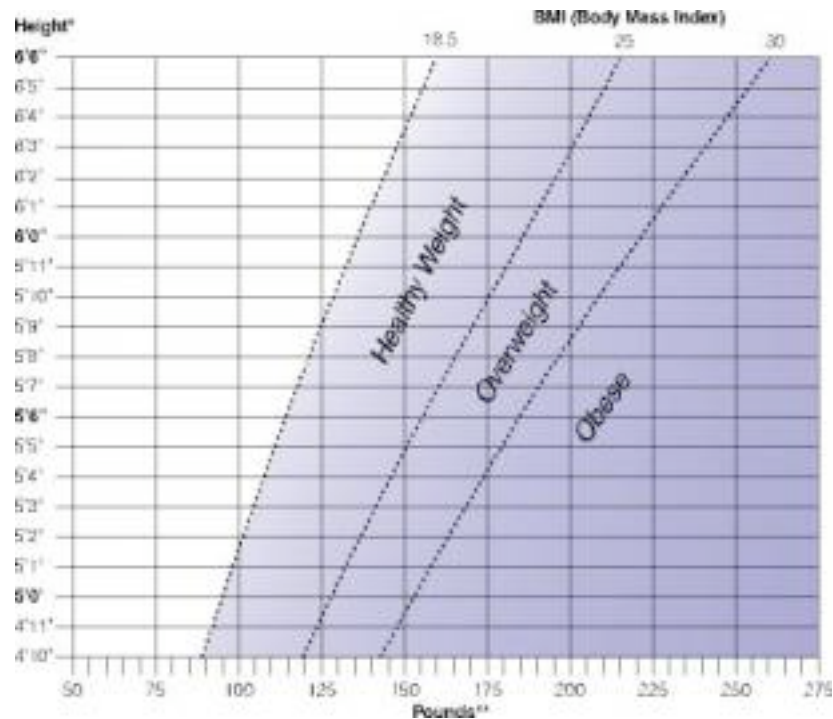
Over sixty percent of Americans who are twenty years of age and older are overweight. Twenty-five percent of American adults are obese as well. This puts them at risk for many chronic diseases and conditions. The current medical standard used to measure overweight and obesity is the body mass index (BMI). By dividing a person's weight in kilograms by height in meters, a BMI number is determined. If that number is over 25, the person needs to lose some fat. There are many plans to choose from. Many focus only on food consumed. Others focus on a combination of diet and exercise. If followed properly, any of these plans will work to reduce body fat and improve overall health.

## INTRODUCTION

### Description and History

Over sixty percent of Americans who are twenty years of age and older are overweight. One fourth of American adults are obese as well. This puts them at an increased health risk for many chronic diseases including high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and adult-onset diabetes.

The current medical standard used to measure the degree of overweight and obesity in adults is the body mass index (BMI). BMI is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by height in meters squared ( $BMI = \text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ). Figure 1 is a useful guide for determining ranges for healthy and unhealthy weights. Persons with a body mass index of 25 to 29.9 are considered overweight. A BMI of 30 or greater is considered obese. Find your weight on the bottom of the graph. Go straight up from that point until you come to the line that matches your height. Then look to find your weight group



**Figure 1: Body Mass Index chart.** Source: "Understanding Adult Obesity." NIDDK. October 2001. NIDDK Weight-control Information Network. 4 August 2002 <<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs/unders.htm>>.

People who have a BMI of 30 or more should be able to improve their health through weight loss according to healthcare providers. Losing five to ten percent of overall weight can improve health by lowering both blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Also, research has shown that type 2 diabetes can be prevented with a weight loss of five to seven percent in those considered to have a high risk for this disease.

**Statement of Purpose**

While experts agree that weight loss is crucial in preventing and controlling many diseases and conditions, they can not agree on the best method to achieve weight loss. Following is a comparison of several of the more popular weight loss programs available today. The reader should be able to compare the programs and find one that he or she is most likely to follow for an extended period of time to make healthy life style changes.

**Target Audience**

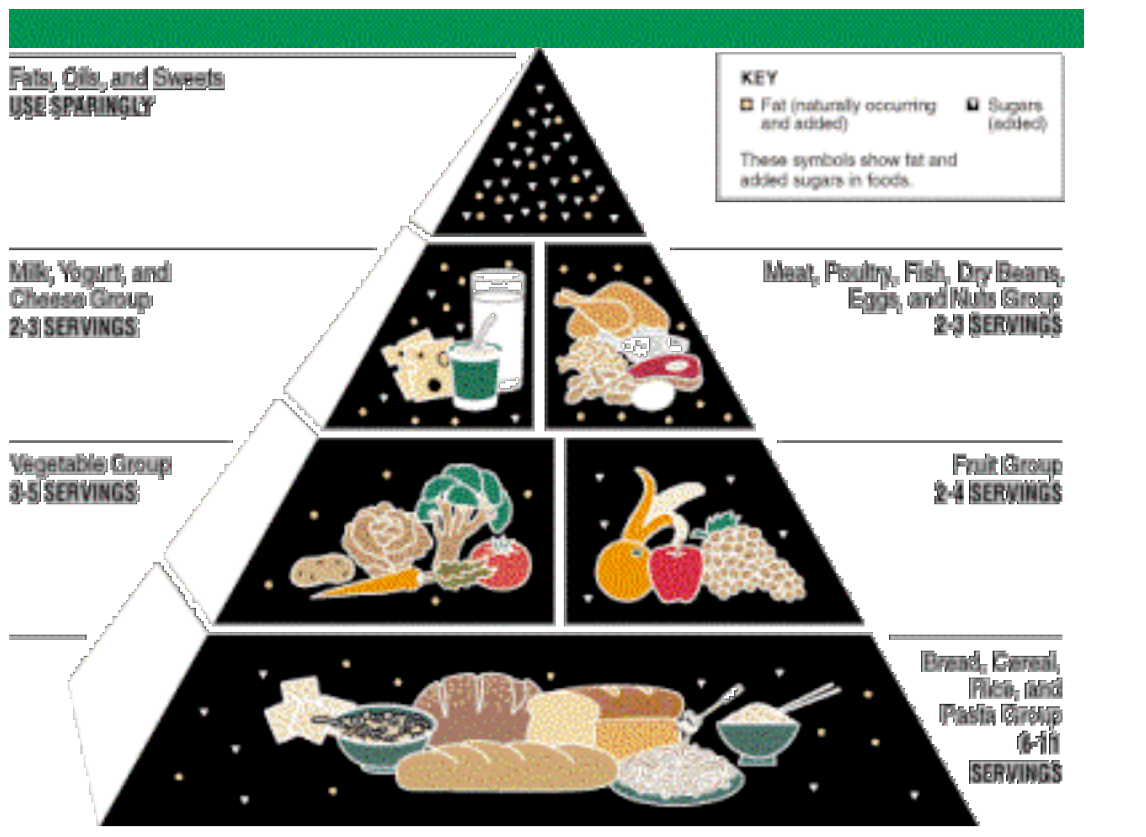
The primary audience for this report is Dr. Carl Brucker. The secondary audience is anyone who wants to achieve weight loss and improved overall health.

**DIET CENTERED PLANS**

Each of the plans discussed in this report involve a modification of diet. The first two plans focus mainly on limiting daily food intake as the primary means of weight loss.

**USDA Food Pyramid**

The United States Department of Agriculture recommends eating a variety of foods to obtain the nutrients and other substances needed for good health. The USDA has developed the Food Guide Pyramid (Figure 2) to display the five major food groups that we need to eat every day for optimal nutritional health. It also recommends approximate quantities that the average person should consume daily.



**FIGURE 2: USDA FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID**

**Source:** USDA Food Guide Pyramid. [nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov). January 2002. US Dept. of Agriculture. 4 August 2002 <<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/dga95/fig01.html>>.

The pyramid shows that foods from grains along with vegetables as being the foundation of a healthy diet. Add to this a limited amount of meat and dairy, using fat and sweets sparingly, to create a well rounded diet.

### **The 10% Solution**

Joy Bauer, a New York City dietician, has developed a weight-loss plan called “The 90/10 Weight Loss Plan.” Bauer says “Denying yourself the foods you love is a recipe for weight-loss disaster” (Bauer 97). In her article Bauer says that only one in every four dieters successfully keep off the weight that they have lost.

After analyzing many dieters and their failed efforts, she recognized a pattern. The dieters tried to lose weight eating from a plan that was radically different from their usual diet. She designed her plan for this type of dieter.

The main emphasis of her diet is portion control along with satisfying cravings. This is another diet where you plan what you will eat in advance. After the basic



nutritional requirements are planned for, a reasonable portion of foods that would be considered forbidden on many other diets are added to make up the final ten to twenty percent of the daily menu. This allows for the satisfying of cravings that undermine most diets.

Bauer recommends exercise along with her diet program, even if it is just taking stairs instead of an elevator, or parking a little farther from the entrance to a shopping center. She believes that when dieters start seeing results in the form of pounds lost, lower cholesterol levels, and lower blood pressure, they will want to increase activity on their own.

## **PLANS THAT COMBINE DIET AND EXERCISE**

While diet is a very important factor in losing excess body fat, exercise is also an important part of the process. It takes 3500 calories to burn off one pound of fat. By reducing the number of calories consumed and also adding exercise to the formula, the process of fat burning is speeded up, allowing for faster weight loss. Exercise also gives the added benefit of a stronger and more efficient cardio-vascular system.

### **Body for LIFE**

In the Body for LIFE plan, creator Bill Phillips emphasizes goal setting and planning as key elements in reaching your ideal weight and fitness level and maintaining them. He recommends eating five or six smaller meals each day made up of high quality, low fat foods. He, of course, also highly recommends his own brand of nutritional supplements that contain vitamins, minerals, and controversial performance enhancing ingredients such as Creatine<sup>®</sup>, caffeine, and Ephedrine<sup>®</sup>.

Each week Phillips recommends planning out your entire menu and work out schedule and carefully documenting your progress. This gives you a record of what you have accomplished, as well as a motivational tool. If you know that you have to write down haven eaten that snack, you may stop and think about whether you really want it or not.

This is one of many programs that emphasizes not only diet, but diet with exercise. The Body for LIFE exercise program recommends working out six days every week. Three days of aerobic activity, mixed in with three days of weight lifting. Aerobic sessions should be 20 minutes long, and weight lifting only forty-five minutes. Phillips says that if done properly, this is all that is needed to achieve maximum results. (Phillips, Body for LIFE 79)

The part of this plan that is really unique is that on the seventh day of each week, there is no exercise and you are supposed to eat whatever you want. This is supposed to fool your body into burning more calories because it is not going into conservation mode from a constant decrease of caloric intake. Phillips emphasizes that no one is perfect and

not to strive for perfection. If you get off the program, start again and never look back. This is a lifetime process and that is how it must be viewed.

### **Make the Connection**

In their best seller Make the Connection, Oprah Winfrey and her personal trainer Bob Greene outline ten steps to a better body – and a better life. (Greene, Make the Connection 87) Their ten steps are listed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Ten Steps to a Better Body - and a Better Life**

1. Exercise aerobically, five to seven days each week (preferably in the morning.)
2. Exercise in the zone (at a level seven or eight.)
3. Exercise for 20 to 60 minutes each exercise session.
4. Eat a low-fat, balanced diet each day.
5. Eat three meals and two snacks each day.
6. Limit or eliminate alcohol.
7. Stop eating two to three hours before bedtime.
8. Drink six to eight glasses of water each day.
9. Have at least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables each day.
10. Renew your commitment to healthy living each day (Daily Renewal).

**Source:** Greene, Bob and Oprah Winfrey. Make the Connection: Ten Steps to a Better Body and a Better Life. New York: Oprah Winfrey Publications, 1996.

Winfrey and Greene emphasize that these changes are effective and efficient in changing your metabolism and your life. Discipline, inner strength, and will power are the qualities that they believe lead to permanent weight loss and a healthy life style. They encourage readers to keep a journal to determine what and why they eat, eliminating one “bad” food at a time from your diet rather than making sudden changes. The emphasis of this plan is more on things like finding joy in your life and living in the moment. They try to put food in its proper place, as fuel to give you the energy you need to be healthy and happy. Once again, Winfrey and Greene emphasize that this is a lifetime process for health, not a short term solution.

### **Protein Power**

Currently, one of the most popular diets is a high protein, low fat diet. There are many programs on the market today based on this principle. Protein Power was developed by Doctors Michael and Mary Dan Eades of Medi-Stat Medical Clinic in Little Rock, Arkansas. They write:

“The major diseases of Western civilization – obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, elevated blood fats, and diabetes – have a common bond. In truth these diseases that afflict , disable, and kill so many people in America

today aren't diseases at all; they're symptoms of a more basic single disorder: hyperinsulinemia (excess insulin) and insulin resistance."

(Eades Protein Power 70)

They believe that food has awesome powers to correct these disorders. By simply giving your body the proper tools, in the form of nutrition, it will heal itself.

The main foods in the Protein Power diet include lean cuts of meat, fish, eggs, and low-fat cheeses. Most of the carbohydrates on the diet come from quality vegetables, and a few fruits.

Much like the other plans, the Eades' plan recommends exercise as a vital part of their program. Unlike most plans, they recommend weight lifting as even more important than aerobic activity. They express that weight lifting builds lean muscle mass. Muscle increases overall strength and it also burns more calories than fat. Increasing muscle mass helps to speed up a slow metabolism, thus accelerating the fat loss process.

## **CONCLUSION**

As long as a diet and exercise plan involves burning more calories than are taken in, the dieter will lose fat. Any of the above plans will work. The key is to find the one that you are most likely to stick with for a long period of time in order to achieve lasting weight loss for better overall health.

### Works Cited

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