

5 Questions for Fat Loss

Most people have heard about how to eat for fat loss. But they just can't figure out what to eat when it comes time for a meal. And that's largely because they're asking themselves the wrong questions.

That's why we created this simple cheat sheet. It helps you ask the right questions at the most critical time – when it's time to pick up the fork and spoon. To get the most out of this cheat sheet, simply print it out, fold it up, and make sure to ask yourself the following questions before your next meal.

Q1. Are you eating too much food?

When fat loss is your primary goal, you should stop eating when you're about 80% full. This will leave you satiated but not belly-rubbing full. So, for this next meal, do you plan on eating a little less than you normally would?

You can eat from a smaller plate than usual. You can leave a little on the plate, instead of finishing everything in front of you. Or you can stop at one serving instead of going back for seconds. Whatever strategy you use, make sure you're decreasing your calories compared to what you might normally eat.

Q2. Are you eating enough protein?

Your protein intake determines whether you're going to lose body fat or lean muscle. (Obviously, we want to lose the first and keep the latter.) So, for this next meal, is there enough lean protein included? Men should eat about 2 palm-sized portions and women should eat about 1 palm-sized portion.

You can choose from sources including: lean meats (chicken, turkey, fish, lean beef, lean game meats), lean vegetarian sources (tofu, tempeh, legumes), or powdered protein supplements. Whichever type you choose, make sure you're eating more protein than what you might normally eat.

Q3. Are you eating too many sugars or starches?

Too many starches and sugars in your diet can prevent fat loss (or even cause fat gain). So, for this next meal, are there too many starches, particularly processed ones like bread or pasta? Men should eat less than 1 fist-sized portion and women should eat less than ½ fist-sized portion. Also, the amount of sugar should be minimized.

Starches in the diet include grains, pasta, potatoes, rice, bread, and other carb-dense foods. And added sugars can be found in pop/soda, fruit juices, salad dressings, desserts, sweet snacks, and more. Again, you don't have to cut these out completely. You just have to be sure to eat fewer of them than usual.

Q4. Are you eating enough vegetables?

By replacing your grains with greens, you'll still feel satisfied at the end of a meal while also increasing your intake of fiber and other important vitamins/minerals. So, for this next meal, are you eating enough vegetables? For fat loss, men should eat about 1 cup while women should eat about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

While most people think of salads when veggies are brought up, many other options are available. Baked, grilled, sautéed, or steamed veggies all count. As do foods like pesto or even kale chips. Regardless of which veggies you choose, make sure you're eating more than usual.

Q5. Are you including enough healthy fats?

Highly processed fats, often found in processed foods, can ruin your health and lead to fat gain. However, a healthy mix of other naturally occurring fats is important for fat loss. So, for this next meal, are you eating some healthy fats?

You can choose from sources like olive oil, avocados, raw nuts (not roasted), raw seeds, and omega-3 rich fish oils. Whichever type you choose, make sure you're adding healthy fats to your diet while replacing the unhealthy ones.