

DR. LAYNE NORTON

TOP 20



DIET **SECRETS** FOR PERSONAL TRAINERS



BIOLAYNE





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TOP 20

DIET SECRETS FOR PERSONAL TRAINERS

LEARN MY ESSENTIAL NUTRITION COACHING METHODS TO HELP PERSONAL TRAINERS AND NUTRITIONISTS UNLOCK MIND-BLOWING RESULTS THAT ATTRACT CLIENTS LIKE CRAZY!

BY DR. LAYNE NORTON...

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ABOUT CLEAN HEALTH

Our goal is to prepare you for a successful fitness career by blending the latest science with real-world results that you can use in your business instantly.

Established in 2008, Clean Health is one of the world's leading online fitness educators, having taught more than 50,000 students in over 80 countries.

Our range of online, easy-to-access courses are developed and created by the very best in the industry, across nutrition, sports science, fitness business and strength and conditioning.



Clean Health was founded by personal trainer and company CEO Daine McDonald (@dainemcdonald) as a personal training organization focused on getting results based on the science of lifestyle, nutrition, and training.

Our first performance-based gym was opened in 2012, and by 2015 we had 3 locations and were on our way to completing over 250,000 sessions before we closed our gyms down for good in 2020 to go all-in on online education

We have been featured in numerous media publications and TV shows, including the Sydney Morning Herald, Yahoo Finance, GQ Magazine, Men's Muscle & Health, Men's Fitness, Australian Women's Health & Fitness, Oxygen Magazine and more.

Our experts have presented at some of the most significant health and fitness events globally, including FILEX, MEFIT Summit, and the Australian Fitness Expo.



Our mission is to raise the level of knowledge and industry standards for 500,000 fitness professionals worldwide by 2030.

For more information on us, visit us via the channels below.



INTRODUCTION

Although it might not seem like it...

I grew up skinny, nerdy, with ADHD – not the typical stereotype of a professional bodybuilder, world-record-holding powerlifter, and an internationally renowned nutritionist.

In fact, sports never came naturally to me, and as a youngster, I was picked on a ton and had low self-esteem.

So my journey into the fitness industry came out of a desire to stop being bullied and picked on... oh, and getting in with the ladies. Lol.

Back then, and pre-big internet, I had to get my knowledge from the local bookstore, where I would read up on any weight training or nutrition books I could find.

At 19, I entered my first bodybuilding competition – as a drug-free natural athlete at a stage weight of 175lbs (200lbs off-season).

I finished my degree in Biochemistry with honors (>3.5 GPA) in 2004, and by this time, I was writing articles for bodybuilding.com, which was great, but I still felt as though I knew nothing.

I was passionate about fitness and knew I wanted to be in the industry; however, the only people who made an actual career and income were personal trainers who worked long hours in a gym and people who started supplement companies or gym owners.

Now I didn't have enough money to start up a gym or supplement company, let alone the knowledge – so it canceled those two things out.

I also knew that I couldn't see myself working as a personal trainer out of a gym for \$40 per hour, which was the norm back then. At this point in my career, I was heavily focused on nutrition.

So, I thought to myself; maybe I should further my education and do a postgraduate degree?

INTRODUCTION

It was at this point I realized three things:

- If I did a postgraduate degree, I could delay being in the “real world.”
- I would feel more competent doing it with an increased level of knowledge.
- I wouldn't be out of a job long term with either a master's degree or a Ph.D.,

It was 2004, and this was my lightbulb moment.

I realized that education would be my pathway to fulfillment inside me but also, I didn't know how – long-term financial freedom.

So, from 200 I was able to go “full time” online, and over the last 15+ years, I've figured out how not only to sell millions of dollars a year online but, more importantly, to help other fitness professionals do it through the power of nutritional knowledge!

In short, today, I get to help personal trainers who don't know how to transform their client's physiques consistently figure out how to do that by using the power of evidence-based nutrition to design diets that get results safely and in record time.

Your ability to create diets can change your clients' lives, but as you grow, it will also improve your reputation and the financial success of your business.

So that is what this eBook is about, and I assure you, that if you start applying the information I have outlined in this guide, **YOU WILL** start to help more clients and, as a result, also grow your business.

Best of all, it is **FREE!**

So, what do you have to lose?

Grab a coffee, tea, or simply some water, sit back for the next 30-45 minutes, and enjoy!

Yours in success,

Layne Norton

Layne Norton PhD

SECRET 1:

THE POWER OF EVIDENCE-BASED NUTRITION

It takes just a few seconds of searching on Google to find a vast diversity of views on most questions that face today's personal trainers who are serious about trying to get results for their clients.

So, how does a PT, nutritionist, or even a layperson sift through the trash to find the real keys to using nutrition to enhance body composition outcomes?

Well, my friends, I have an answer for you. It's called **SCIENCE**.

Science is the best method that humanity has come up with to reliably discover why and how things happen in the physical universe.

Science brought us out of the dark ages, and it can also overhaul your personal training or nutrition coaching business.

You just need to understand what it is, how it works, and how not to get fooled when people throw it around without knowing what they're doing. Science starts with a testable hypothesis whereby we take a position. From there, we establish a starting point, and that's what we call a hypothesis.

For example, we may start with the hypothesis that spreading protein intake out over six evenly spaced meals per day will result in more muscle hypertrophy than consuming the same amount of protein over two meals.

Great. We're very clear about the position we're taking, and it's testable. But here is where we start running into problems.

Firstly, you need a big enough sample size. The greater the sample size, the more likely that any difference we observe between groups is caused by our experiment and not something else.

We then need to randomize the sample to ensure one test group does not have a higher prevalence of any external factor than the other. But here is the next problem...human beings are hard to control.

SECRET 1:

THE POWER OF EVIDENCE-BASED NUTRITION

In this example, the number of people who can track every single bit of intake down to the gram for a period long enough to observe differences in something as slow as muscle hypertrophy is vanishingly small.

The difficulties don't end there. How do we measure muscle mass? There are many ways to approach this problem, but none of them is perfect.

What about controlling the subjects' other behaviors that may confound the results, such as their training?

Even if you manage to do this, having one study find a successful outcome is just the beginning of establishing a scientific consensus around an idea. It's not sufficient for something to happen just once.

You need it to happen again, and again and again. This is called replication, and you should be skeptical of any study that makes a big claim but hasn't been replicated.

So, if it's so damn hard to study nutrition in humans, how do we advance our understanding of nutrition using science?

SECRET 1:

THE POWER OF EVIDENCE-BASED NUTRITION



PROTEIN CONSUMPTION RECOMMENDATIONS



WE HAVE A FEW TOOLS AT OUR DISPOSAL.

First, we can study nutrition by using animals other than humans. In fact, many studies that rely on living biological systems use .

Research rodents can be produced at a massive scale and with incredibly high levels of genetic uniformity, which removes a lot of the variation we'd otherwise have to control for in human experiments. Rodents also manifest disease in much the same way as humans.

Another tool available to researchers is meta-analysis. A meta-analysis is essentially a "study of studies."

The results from multiple studies are compared to each other, with specific adjustments made to account for the different approaches taken in each study.

These tools make it easier for researchers to study and make discoveries in the field of nutrition, which in turn makes it possible for us as coaches and fitness enthusiasts to get the most out of the human body.

But that doesn't get us off the hook for knowing good science from bad. You still need a basic understanding of how science works, plus a well-tuned bulls**t detector and a healthy dose of skepticism.

SECRET 2:

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTEIN INTAKE

When programming a diet for fat loss, we should always consider protein as the first step after setting our client's calories.

There are some specific reasons for this.

First, protein is satiating and generally increases satiety to a greater extent than carbohydrates or fats [1].

Secondly, protein is the most metabolically expensive food we eat, taking up to 30% of the energy it gives for us just to digest, absorb, and metabolize it [1].

And lastly, protein helps us protect our lean body mass [1].

When we focus on weight loss, the body will perceive that as a threat, and it will do everything it can to protect itself, including shedding metabolically expensive lean tissue. We want to avoid this if possible, and one of the most effective strategies we have is ensuring adequate protein intake.

I typically recommend targeting between 2.2 and 3 grams of protein per kilogram of lean body mass. Where you or your client falls on this spectrum depends on a few factors.

FACTOR 1: TOTAL CALORIC INTAKE

The greater the deficit, the more aggressive the body's reaction. To counteract this, we should increase protein on more aggressive deficits.

FACTOR 2: AGE

As we age, our ability to synthesize new proteins declines. This increases the need for protein if we want to achieve similar levels of muscle protein synthesis [2].

SECRET 2: THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTEIN INTAKE

A good rule of thumb is to increase protein requirements by 1% per year of age over 40, so for somebody who's 50 years old, you might increase their protein by 10% above what you'd already set for it.

When it comes to protein timing, the data suggests you will help your clients get a better outcome if you spread most of their protein out over three to five high-quality protein meals per day [3].

Now, remember that if you have your client consume all their protein in only one or two sittings, they miss out on multiple opportunities to spike muscle protein synthesis throughout the day hence why I prefer to spread things out a little!



SECRET 3:

WHY CARBS AREN'T THE ENEMY

Having this basic understanding of carbohydrate metabolism can help you cut through a lot of bulls**t.

Many potential clients you meet will have some pretty interesting views on carbs based on television, social, the internet, etc.

Come to think of it, many fitness professionals do, too, right? You don't have to look very hard on Instagram to find someone screaming about how sugar is poison to the body! Here's a question...

If sugar is poison, why does your body convert every single gram of carbohydrate you consume into sugar?

The answer is simple. Your body requires a certain amount of glucose to function.

That's right. Glucose is non-negotiable! Your body requires it. Now, you may be thinking to yourself, "but carbs are the only non-essential macronutrient," and you'd be right. Your body will fairly quickly adapt to a zero-carbohydrate intake and go merrily on its way.

But here's the thing. Just because you're not eating any carbohydrates doesn't mean your body isn't using . Your body is constantly producing glucose regardless of your carbohydrate intake, and the liver can convert many amino acids into glucose through a process called gluconeogenesis.

As it turns out, your liver can make about five grams of glucose per hour. That's 120 grams a day, and this is a very good thing as the human body requires about one hundred grams of glucose per day to function.

SECRET 3:

WHY CARBS AREN'T THE ENEMY

Also, when it comes to short bouts of high-intensity work, the kind that is over and done with before the respiratory system can pump more oxygen into the blood, glucose is not the superior source of fuel.

IT'S THE ONLY FUEL SOURCE!

Some people may hear this and think that I'm saying that you can't do sprints when you're on a ketogenic diet. You absolutely can. You will just hit a wall much faster.

Your body can produce some glucose with zero carbohydrate intake, but the problem is you'll burn through those stores pretty quickly.

Then you'll likely hit a wall where it's going to be very difficult to continue that high-intensity work without exogenous glucose consumption. Just remember, the human body is evolved to use sugar as fuel, at least in part. Sugar isn't evil, and if it were, then human metabolism would be downright diabolical.

That said, carbs aren't magic either, and excess glucose will spill over into fat storage, just like Carbs are simply a tool in your toolbox that you can use to get a result with your clients. Become the master of the tools, and you'll do amazing things. Let the tools master you, and you may just be a tool yourself!

SECRET 4: DIETARY FAT MYTHS

Just like carbs, **you shouldn't fear fats.**

As it turns out, fats are essential to several bodily functions. Without fats, cell membranes would not be able to maintain their integrity. Fat is also vital to creating many hormones, and to top it off... the human brain is about 60% fat!

Those sound like pretty important reasons why fat is so important for human life in general.

Having said that, there's a lot of confusion out there around how fat works, and there are still some pervasive myths about fats going around. For example, many believe that separating carbs and fats in your meals is better.

You might hear a #fitpro advocating for protein plus fat meals in the morning and then transitioning to protein plus carb meals in the evening in conjunction with the training window.

The thinking goes that if we control insulin while the body is exposed to fat, our adipose tissue won't be triggered to store that fat. It seems reasonable on the surface, but it falls apart when you look at how metabolism works.

Let's consider an extreme example.

Let's say you eat 100% of your carbs and fats for the day in one sitting. Theoretically, you should store the fat in adipose tissue because you're spiking insulin by taking in carbs. You will store more fat, but this is not the end of the metabolic story.

SECRET 4:

DIETARY FAT MYTHS

What happens if you continue throughout your day? Eventually, you'll run out of glucose from the carbs. Now what? Over the rest of the day, you'll end up burning quite a bit of stored fat because you're not eating any fats or carbohydrates.

You're always storing fat. You're also always burning fat. The net storage or deposition of fat will come down to your calorie balance for the day.

This idea that you shouldn't eat carbs and fats simultaneously leads to another myth that, if taken seriously, can be pretty disastrous for anyone looking to lose fat.

Many people believe that you can't store fat if you don't trigger insulin release. It's not hard to see how people might come to this conclusion. Insulin is an energy storage signaling hormone, and if you put insulin, free fatty acids, and adipose together, the adipose is going to take up and store quite a bit of fatty acids.

The problem with this idea is that it takes the storage function of insulin too far. Just because insulin can accelerate fatty acid storage into adipose under the right circumstances doesn't mean that you can't store fat in its absence.

SECRET 4: DIETARY FAT MYTHS

Your body can still store fat even if your carb take is zero. It doesn't require insulin in order to be able to deposit fats into adipose tissue. Many people who believe strongly in the ketogenic diet as the best way to lose fat get caught up in this myth. When you're on keto, you burn a lot of fat. That's true because you're eating a lot of fat. But what happens when you take in more fat than you need?

You don't burn it. You store it. Yes, you most certainly can get fat on keto! The critical thing to remember is that fats are a tool, just like carbohydrates. They're an energy source that you can manipulate to get specific body composition outcomes with yourself and your clients.

So, remember, fat isn't evil... you need it to survive, but it isn't magical either.

SECRET 5: MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FIBER

Fiber is technically a type of carbohydrate. That said, it functions very differently from regular carbs in human metabolism, so let's dig into more detail.

There are two types of fiber. Soluble fiber dissolves in water, and it benefits human health by binding to cholesterol as it travels through the gastrointestinal tract.

Now it's worth noting soluble fiber can also bind to some vitamins and minerals. Still, you would need to have it in enormous amounts to impact nutrient absorption negatively.

Insoluble fiber is precisely that. It doesn't dissolve in water and benefits digestion by adding bulk to the stool.

While fiber is vital for our digestive health, there are a lot of misconceptions about fiber.

For starters, there's the idea that because fiber is a bit more difficult for humans to digest, it's not a significant source of calories. This is misguided. The issue is that while humans cannot completely metabolize fiber on their own, our metabolism doesn't just consist of human cells.

Our guts consist of colonies of bacteria. In fact, these non-human stowaways outnumber your own human cells ten to one. And as it turns out, the bacteria in your gut can indeed break fiber down. When gut bacteria break down fiber, you end up with short-chain fatty acids, otherwise known as SCFAs.

And guess who can metabolize short-chain fatty acids? You got it! Us. It's estimated that short-chain fatty acids produced in this way contribute somewhere between one to three calories per gram of soluble fiber intake.

SECRET 5: MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FIBER

There goes the idea that fiber is calorie-free, and it makes the idea that you can subtract fiber carbohydrates from non-fiber carbohydrates downright laughable.

Different countries have different regulations on how fiber is reported. Quite often, if you see a protein bar advertised as "low carb," it's not really low carb.

Instead, it's full of different types of fibers, and as you now understand, these fibers are indeed a form of carbohydrate, and they do contain calories.

Fiber misconceptions aside, this is still a vital macronutrient. Fiber, on the whole, promotes healthy digestion, and it can contribute to a sense of fullness that can be very beneficial when restricting calories.

Fiber isn't magic though, and it's definitely not calorie-free. Your best bet when it comes to managing fiber as a macronutrient is just to treat it like any other carb.

Doing this consistently will allow you to make informed decisions about your diet as you observe changes or your clients' goals evolve.

SECRET 6:

UNDERSTANDING THE HIERARCHY OF IMPORTANCE

As a fitness professional working with clients who have fat loss goals or as an enthusiast who's looking to optimize your own body composition, you likely want to know just where to invest your energy to get the best results with the least amount of effort?

Not all interventions are created equal. Some are essential to fat loss, while others are entirely optional, verging on counterproductive in some cases!

The sad thing is that many coaches, influencers, and gen pop clients get stuck on some of the most useless and stupid interventions available. How do we avoid majoring in the minors and getting stuck in useless interventions?

Easy, learn and implement what works, and do so in a way that is supported and reinforced by your behaviors and lifestyle.

Let's look at my pyramid below in figure 1, so you can see what I mean.

FIGURE 1. BIOLAYNE HIERARCHY OF IMPORTANCE



SECRET 6:

UNDERSTANDING THE HIERARCHY OF IMPORTANCE

COMPLIANCE

Compliance is the base of the pyramid and the foundation of any effective nutrition intervention. Even if you implement the best possible set of interventions for fat loss, what will your client results be if they don't adhere to your dietary advice?

They'll achieve nothing meaningful, and they may even reinforce some negative behaviors that may curtail future efforts to get results.

CALORIC REQUIREMENTS

The next pyramid level is establishing the caloric requirements based on the client's goal. For example, if the goal is fat loss, you have to create a negative energy balance, so that body mass is used to make up the difference between the calories expended and calories consumed.

If it is muscle building, the same is true in reverse. Ultimately, It doesn't matter what else you do. If you don't create the correct caloric intake, your client simply won't achieve their goal, whether fat loss or hypertrophy.

EXERCISE

Not only is exercise important for energy expenditure, but the research looking at long-term weight maintenance post weight reduction shows that people who exercise actually have a much greater chance of maintaining lost weight compared to people who don't [4].

In addition, exercise also has the advantage of sensitizing us to satiety signals which may help control food intake [5,6].

SELF-MONITORING

The next layer of the pyramid is self-monitoring, and there is now compelling data that people who track their progress are more likely to succeed with long-term weight loss [7].

SECRET 6:

UNDERSTANDING THE HIERARCHY OF IMPORTANCE

This makes intuitive sense. If you're monitoring your weight regularly and you see it starting to go up, you're more likely to modify your behavior based on that negative feedback regulation.

MACRONUTRIENTS

The next level on the pyramid is related to macronutrients. As a general rule of thumb, the greater the protein deficit, the higher the protein needs to protect lean muscle tissue. Protein and fiber are also the most satiating macronutrients, contributing to an overall sense of fullness that will help counteract the hunger our bodies may inevitably throw at us when dieting.

As for fats and carbohydrates, as our primary energy sources, these are important to get right. If we don't have adequate energy to fuel our bodies, workouts may suffer and put fat loss at risk.

SUPPLEMENTS

The final level of the hierarchy is supplements. Of all the interventions mentioned so far, these are by far the most optional, and for some, spending any time here at all can lead to counterproductive distraction. As I have already mentioned, it starts with the most essential and foundational interventions to the least. Each layer as you go up the pyramid establishes the foundation for the next two, and each subsequent layer must be compatible with the ones below it.

Remember this when coaching your clients and ingrain it into their mindset approach with their dietary choices.

SECRET 7:

THE SUCCESS FORMULA FOR CALCULATING CALORIES

Everything that happens in your body is fueled by energy. Every breath you take, every move you make, and every bond you break is fueled by ATP. Okay, maybe we went a bit far, but you get the idea.

Of your total daily energy expenditure by far, the biggest contributor is typically your basal metabolic rate, referred to as BMR. This is the amount of energy required just to keep the lights on. Functions like breathing heartbeat all fall into the BMR bucket.

While overall, metabolism can vary significantly from person to person. BMR tends to be reasonably consistent across individuals. This has allowed several equations such as the Muller equation to be created, which estimate BMR based on the factors that most influence it, such as weight, body composition, age, and sex being the primary ones.

The interesting thing is that BMR accounts for about 60% of our overall energy expenditure. This percentage can fluctuate from person to person as more active people will have relatively less energy expenditure from BMR and less active individuals, relatively more.

But in general, BMR is the most significant contributor to energy expenditure, and it's essential to understand that although BMR can be reliably calculated, it's still variable and influenced by nutrition interventions you impose on the body.

For example, if you put someone on an extreme diet, their BMR will naturally be reduced as a protective adaptation to the reduction in food. In the more extreme cases, BMR can be reduced by as much as 15 to 30% per day.



SECRET 7:

THE SUCCESS FORMULA FOR CALCULATING CALORIES

The next grouping of energy consumption comes in the form of Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis, or more succinctly put, NEAT.

NEAT encompasses all the movements you make without really intending to.

Your NEAT accounts for about 25% of your overall energy expenditure for most people, but it's also incredibly variable from person to person. As someone starts to diet, their NEAT will likely go down as it's highly modifiable.

NEAT I have found is one of the most critical variables to look at with your clients because it can be the missing link for them getting results, especially if that goal is fat loss.

The next grouping of energy expenditure is the thermic effect of food abbreviated to TEF. This is the energy your body must expend to release the energy in the food you eat. The different forms of foods require different amounts of energy to liberate the energy within them.

Fats are a bit more like gasoline. Only 2 to 3% of the energy in the fat you consume is lost to metabolizing it. Carbs are between 6 to 8%, although some studies suggest 5 to 15%, while protein and fiber have the greatest TEF at around 20 to 30% energy loss.

In total, TEF accounts for roughly 10 to 15% of your total energy expenditure and isn't as highly modifiable by dieting as other components of energy expenditure.

SECRET 7:

THE SUCCESS FORMULA FOR CALCULATING CALORIES

The last component of daily energy expenditure is exercise.

Believe it or not, exercise activity makes up very little of your typical gen pop client's total energy expenditure.

That being said, elite athletes or triathletes, or people who exercise for a living, do get a significantly greater amount of energy expenditure per day from exercise than your average person.

So, we get the following formula with these elements of energy expenditure...

Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE) = Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) + Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis (NEA) + Thermic Effect of Food (TEF) + Exercise Activity (EA).

Or better yet, figure 2 below illustrates it perfectly.

FIGURE 2. CALCULATING TDEE



In summary, your TDEE is basically "calories out." "calories in" is what you eat, so remember this when coaching your clients!

SECRET 8:

THE CALORIC FORMULA FOR FAT LOSS

Step one to achieving a custom fit when it comes to fat loss programming is to understand what the client's fat loss goal is.

How much do they want to lose, and in what period of time do they want to lose it. If we don't know this, we won't have the slightest clue how to set their calories for a deficit.

Once we know how much fat a client needs to lose and how long we have to lose it, we need to calculate or measure the client's TDEE. If we have a history of food logs and body weight measurements, we can determine the true TDEE by looking at what level of caloric intake holds their weight steady, given their current activity level.

If we don't have these records, we can use something like the Müller equation to estimate it based on their weight, body composition, age, and sex.

You can then apply an activity factor ranging from 1.2 for sedentary individuals to 1.9 for extremely active individuals. This will give you their approximate TDEE.

Once we have a baseline for TDEE for our clients and know how much they want to lose and how fast we can make an initial calculation for their caloric deficit. I suggest targeting between 0.4% to 1.2% of total body weight loss per week as a general rule of thumb.

If you target less than 0.4% of total body weight, you run the risk of being in too small of a deficit to reliably get out of maintenance range. Going above 1.2% per week, on the other hand, is probably too aggressive, and you may see an increased loss of lean tissue.

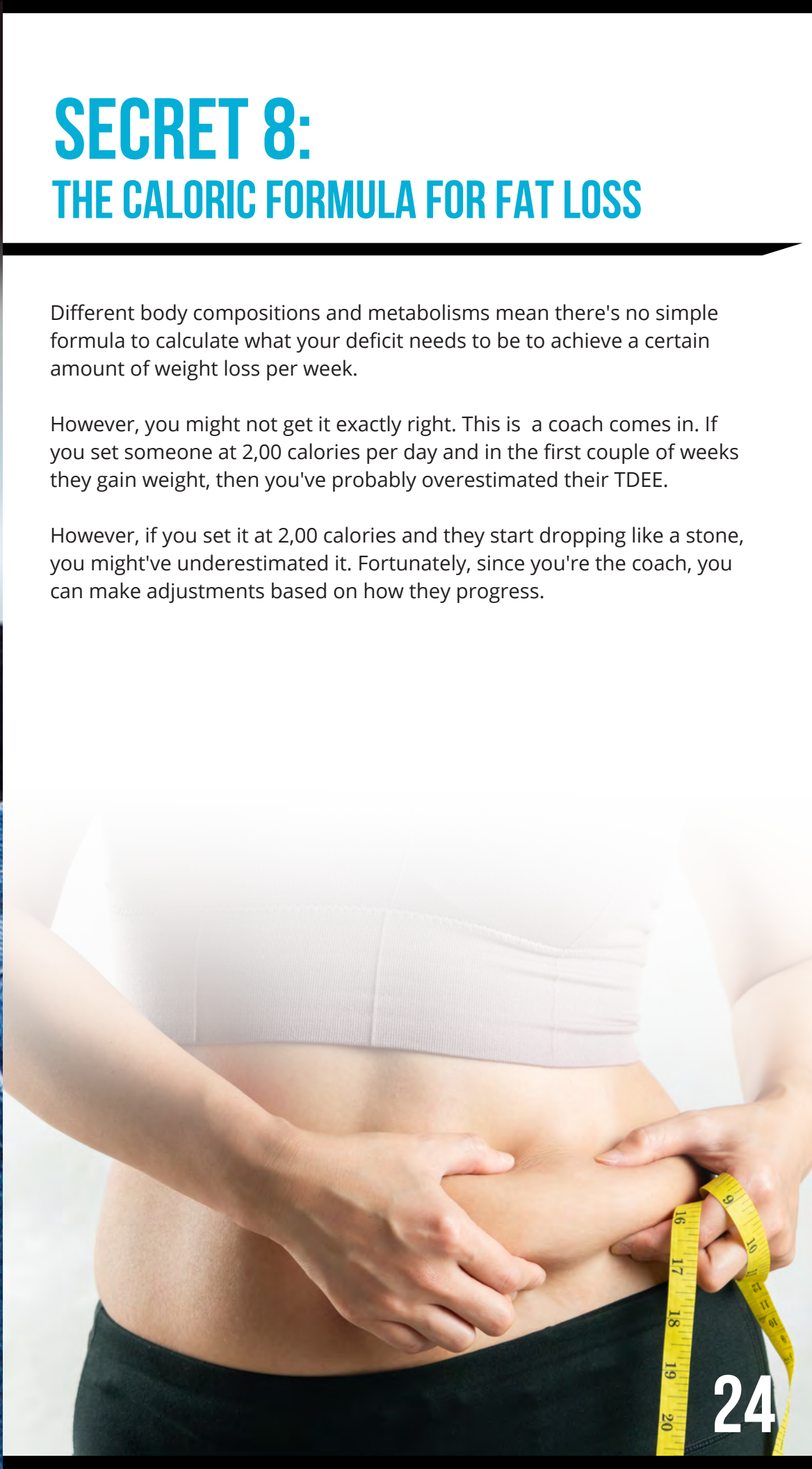
SECRET 8:

THE CALORIC FORMULA FOR FAT LOSS

Different body compositions and metabolisms mean there's no simple formula to calculate what your deficit needs to be to achieve a certain amount of weight loss per week.

However, you might not get it exactly right. This is where a coach comes in. If you set someone at 2,000 calories per day and in the first couple of weeks they gain weight, then you've probably overestimated their TDEE.

However, if you set it at 2,000 calories and they start dropping like a stone, you might've underestimated it. Fortunately, since you're the coach, you can make adjustments based on how they progress.



SECRET 9:

THE CALORIC FORMULA FOR MUSCLE BUILDING

There is a lot in common between programming nutrition for muscle gain and fat loss. The client's goal must be at the center of the planning for fat loss. How much weight do they want to lose? How fast do they want to lose fat?

Knowing the answers to those questions allows the coach to calculate an appropriate deficit. The same principles apply to building muscle. It is imperative to know how much the client wants to gain and how quickly they want to gain before setting a caloric surplus to achieve this goal.

The next step to programming nutrition for muscle gain also mirrors programming nutrition for fat loss. We need to determine the client's TDEE or maintenance calories.

We can either use historical data that we've already collected on the client's intake, activity level, and weight to determine their true TDEE, or we can use whatever method you prefer to use in your practice to give us an estimate of TDEE as a starting point.

Katch-McArdle, Muller equation, there are many to choose from. From here, we need to decide how to adjust his TDEE. Because metabolism's anabolic response varies so widely between individuals, we can start with high-level guidelines here and then fine-tune them.

SECRET 9:

THE CALORIC FORMULA FOR MUSCLE BUILDING

On the conservative end, we would add between 5% to 10% to someone's TDEE.

This is suitable for anyone interested in a slow and steady approach to building lean body mass without putting on lots of body fat.

The trade-off is speed. Lean mass will almost certainly come at this conservative surplus, but it won't happen as quickly as a more aggressive surplus.

Using a more moderate approach, we'd usually increase the calories by 10% to 20% above TDEE. We prefer this approach for beginner and intermediate clients.

Why not more advanced clients? Well, the closer to their natural limit you get, the slower lean body mass increases will be, and the less excess energy you're going to need.

An aggressive surplus would be between 20% to 30% above their TDEE. This approach is really only suitable for beginners looking to pack on as much muscle mass as possible in as little time as possible.

Unless your client is comfortable gaining some excess body fat, intermediate and advanced clients should stay away from this level of caloric surplus.

Now, these are just guidelines, so don't get too dogmatic about these numbers.

SECRET 9: THE CALORIC FORMULA FOR MUSCLE BUILDING

Some people have such a wide maintenance range that adding 5% to 10% to their predicted TDEE will have absolutely no effect whatsoever, and you're going to have to get more aggressive. Others may have a big response to small additions to their TDEE.

Just like estimated maintenance calories, use these numbers as a starting point, then monitor progress closely and adjust as needed in response to how your client's body responds.

SECRET 10:

WHEN TO BULK OR RE-COMP?

Experienced coaches will face this question from clients often: 'Should I bulk and cut or start a re-composition?'

Predictably there are a lot of opinions about this question. Also to note, not many scientific facts are used in these conversations.

Part of the confusion surrounding this question is that, to a certain extent, both strategies work for certain people. The key is to know the circumstances in which they can be effective and then deploy them properly.

There are **three** in particular, which I will now explain.

In people who have lots of body fat

Having a lot of excess body fat makes it easy to create big movements on the scale in a relatively short period of time. It also prevents the body from attacking lean mass while in a calorie deficit.

I will note that it is very common for the untrained, obese individual to quickly shed body fat and gain lean muscle.

This can be done when they start a well-controlled, negative energy balance diet, where they increase their protein intake and participate in a gym resistance training program.

Clients who are new to resistance training

'Newbie gains' is a term used to describe the quick gains in strength and muscle for people new to resistance training. The further away a client is from their natural upper limit of lean body mass, the easier it will be to gain muscle mass.

Newbies are far away from their muscle-building potential, as can be imagined. After all, they do not even lift.

SECRET 10:

WHEN TO BULK OR RE-COMP?

In fact, the hypertrophy response can be so overwhelming that the body does what is called “nutrient partitioning”. A large number of calories will be required for the growth response in muscle.

You must be aware that those calories consumed will be preferentially partitioned towards muscle and lean tissue and away from fat mass.

People who choose to use illegal ergogenic aids, such as steroids

Human beings have natural limits on the rate that they can build muscle and lose fat.

Unfortunately, that means that some humans will turn to exogenous hormones, such as steroids. The physiology of someone on steroids is quite different from someone who is natural.

Muscle hypertrophy can increase at dramatic rates, depending on the drug the person is using. These trainees get more out of their interventions than an unenhanced trainee.

Having one or more of these factors (listed earlier) at play can make re-comp a viable strategy. The challenge comes in when there is an attempt to re-comp when these factors are not in the client's favor.

Yes, it is possible to gain muscle and lose fat simultaneously, even if the client is lean, well trained, and drug-free.

The problem is that it is extraordinarily slow and does not often happen to an appreciable degree, especially if the client is not genetically blessed.

SECRET 11:

DETERMINING PROTEIN TARGETS

As we already discussed, when programming a diet for fat loss, we always set protein first after setting calories. Remember, protein is satiating, it's the most metabolically expensive food we eat, and it also helps us protect our lean body mass.

I typically recommend targeting between 2.2 and 3 grams of protein per kilogram of lean body mass. Where you or your client falls on this spectrum depends on a few factors.

There are two things to consider when setting protein.

The first consideration is that as you age, your body becomes less sensitive to the anabolic effect of amino acids, and it requires more protein to get the same anabolic effects compared to when you were young [2].

That is not to say that you can't build any muscle after a certain age, but it just means that to maximize protein synthesis, the client will need proportionately more protein. Adding 1% more protein every year after 40 years of age is recommended.

The second consideration relates to protein as calories increase. The higher the overall calories, the less protein required. A surplus of calories discourages muscle protein breakdown, so net muscle anabolism will increase.

As there is an increase in the surplus from conservative to moderate to aggressive, the protein can be reduced if desired. In fact, for some clients who struggle to eat enough food, it is recommended that they lower their protein intake slightly when they are in a mass-building phase.

SECRET 11:

DETERMINING PROTEIN TARGETS

Either way, I recommend having your client consume their protein spread **evenly over *three to five* meals per day.**

That's because there's research showing that in terms of muscle protein anabolism, you can't make up for low protein at one time of the day by overeating at another time of the day due to the anabolic cap from a meal.

Once you get past a certain level of protein at a meal, probably around 40 to 50 grams, depending on your body weight and the source of protein, you don't get additional muscle-building benefits from additional protein [8,9].



SECRET 12:

WHEN TO PROGRAM REFEEDS

The human body isn't a big fan of dieting. Evolution has taught the body that when calories are restricted, things are not going well in the world.

A caloric deficit is nothing more than controlled starvation in the end. All is not lost, however. We can teach the body not to be so worried about our calorie deficit. And one of the tools we have for doing this is refeeds and diet breaks.

Diet breaks and refeeds are periods of time at higher calories that can signal to the body that your metabolism doesn't need to adapt negatively because there is some food available.

The trick with these is to get the programming right. Now refeeds and diet breaks are two sides of a similar coin. You're just bringing calories up from a previously defined deficit for a specified period of time.

As far as modern understanding and terminology, typically, a refeed is only a day or a few days. In contrast, the diet break is longer (typically a week or more).

So, which should you use? Well, there are a few things to consider.

First, diet breaks are probably a better tool if the goal is to delay the onset of metabolic adaptation. Longer diet breaks tend to be more protective of [10].

Here's the kicker – the more days your client spends in a refeed or diet break, the longer you're going to have to diet!

SECRET 12:

WHEN TO PROGRAM REFEEDS

Most people will want to lose weight within a certain amount of time. So, if you're using diet breaks and refeeds, you're going to have to calculate them into your overall deficit to ensure you still fit within that .

Next, you'll need to consider how your client responds to diet breaks and refeeds.

Some clients like to be in a consistent rhythm. Some people don't like changes to their diet. Some people hate the idea of high or days. They just want to eat the same thing consistently every day. It helps with their routine.

What I like to do for many clients is time a refeed into the natural cycle of the week.

For example, I have people eat in a deficit during the week, often followed by a two-day refeed over the weekend so that they have more flexibility during that time when they'd be more prone to have higher calories.

Now, first and foremost, I want to mention that a refeed is not an opportunity to stuff your face with whatever you want. I'm not a big fan of cheat days. I find that untracked, unrestricted cheat days just turn into binge sessions more often than not and are really counterproductive.

Also, refeeds aren't magic, so they don't come without a cost. We always have to take the extra calories from those days into account in terms of our weekly calorie budget.

So, if you add a refeed day or two to your client's diet plan, you need to take away those calories from one or more of the other days, in my opinion, to ensure they don't spill over and ruin their chance for amazing results!

SECRET 13:

WHEN TO PROGRAM DIET BREAKS

In the last chapter, we talked about how to program in refeeds. Now, calculating diet breaks is a little bit different.

While it's technically possible to take a similar approach as with refeeds, remember that a diet break is just a long refeed, which is 4 or more days. So, spending this long at maintenance will probably make it pretty uncomfortable when returning to a deficit.

So rather than recalculate the deficit with consideration of the diet break, we just added it into the diet.

Meaning that if a client had a goal of losing 5 kilograms of body weight and it was going to take them 12 weeks, if we introduced diet breaks, it would be longer than 12 weeks.

So, for example, an easy way to calculate diet breaks is to use ratios of weeks. You might spend two weeks in a deficit followed by one week on a break.

This would be a 2:1 ratio. Now you can use any ratio that makes sense for your client, their goals, and the time you have.

A specific study used a two-week standard diet and then a two-week diet break and found really great results [11].

I like the 2:1, 3:1, or 3:2 ratios. They can all be effective, and they all have certain advantages and disadvantages, but mostly it boils down to the prerogatives of your client.

SECRET 13:

WHEN TO PROGRAM DIET BREAKS

Now I don't want to give you the impression that diet breaks are necessary. They're not essential, but they can be helpful in specific situations. The leaner your client gets, they are more likely to lose lean body mass versus body fat.

So, one of the things you can do is start incorporating more frequent diet breaks as your client gets leaner.

By the same token, if you have a client starting out who has a lot of body fat, you don't have to do that many diet breaks. In fact, you probably don't have to do them at all because the client has such an extensive reservoir of energy to draw from.

Or perhaps you start out with a really infrequent level of diet breaks, say a 4:1 or 5:1 ratio, and then as they get leaner and leaner, you gradually add in a more frequent amount of diet breaks.

So sometimes I'll start somebody out at a 4:1 ratio, and then after they hit a certain level of body fat, I'll move that to 3:1, then 2:1, and in the case of contest prep clients, I like to get them to a 1:1 ratio by near the end of their prep.

SECRET 14:

UNDERSTAND WHEN & HOW TO REVERSE DIET

Getting super lean is not the most fun you or your clients will have in their life.

Between the food cravings, the social conflicts, reduced energy, and the body doing everything in its power to stop you from losing and keeping fat off, getting lean for most people absolutely sucks.

To add insult to injury, as soon as you finish your diet, your body is in a state perfectly tuned to gain body fat rapidly.

Depending on how much you throw caution to the wind, you could even find yourself in a position where you regain all the fat you lost and then some. After all of that hard work you put into your diet in the first place, the last thing you want is to gain back all of that fat.

That's the point of a reverse diet. While there are many protocols and methods to implement a reverse diet, at its core, a reverse is simply controlled periodic increases in calories to improve energy expenditure while limiting body fat gain.

A well-planned and well-executed reverse diet is the key to reversing the inevitable metabolic slowdown associated with weight loss.

SECRET 14:

UNDERSTAND WHEN & HOW TO REVERSE DIET

Three main populations will benefit from reverse dieting.



1. Those who have achieved their goal

The first group consists of people who have achieved their desired weight loss goal but are on calories that are unsustainably low.

If you've your target weight but had to drop down to 1,200 calories to get there, then you're running on a much slower metabolism than you did before. You also have much less room for mistakes.

Now, you can maintain your 1,200 calories a day, but I wouldn't recommend it. It's not going to leave much room for life.



2. Those who are too lean

The second population of people who can benefit from reverse dieting are those who have reached their weight loss goals, but their body fat levels are unsustainably low. This will almost always be a competitor of some sort, as their endocrine system will likely be out of whack and not functioning correctly.

In the case of this population, you typically want to implement a more aggressive reverse diet, at least at first; once their goal has been achieved and the event has taken place, there's no reason to try and leave the body in this overly stressed state any longer than you need to.

SECRET 14:

UNDERSTAND WHEN & HOW TO REVERSE DIET



3. Those on a very low number of calories

Our third and final population of concern for reverse dieting is those who have not reached their goal weight, but their caloric intake is already not sustainable.

For example, if your client was at 1,200 calories and still had a significant amount of weight to lose, we don't have a whole lot of room to move their calories down any further.

For people like this, and especially people who have large amounts of body weight to lose, reverse dieting at periodic points during their fat loss journey can help them sustain a reasonable energy expenditure and give them a "break from dieting."

I have created an online course exclusively on reverse dieting if you want to learn more in-depth about this topic. Click the link below for more information!

[LEARN MORE](#)

SECRET 15:

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF SLEEP AND STRESS

If I had to go back into the hierarchy of importance pyramid and add something else, it would be sleep and stress, and it would probably be at around the level of protein and fiber.

There's recent emerging evidence that sleep deprivation (<5.5 hours of sleep per night versus eight and a half hours of sleep per night demonstrated the group that was sleep deprived lost nearly half their mass from lean body mass while the group that was non-sleep deprived and had plenty of sleep lost the vast majority of their body mass from fat tissue [12].

That's a huge difference.

Now, part of this is likely because sleep deprivation increases ghrelin, so it increases hunger. It also seems to decrease energy expenditure, plus it negatively impacts recovery from exercise, which may also change which tissues are preferentially lost during a deficit.

So, getting enough sleep should be a big focus during a calorie deficit, and quite frankly, overall, just for a healthy life.

Minimizing stress is also important. People who do well with stress are people who acknowledge it exists. They don't try to pretend it's not there, but they also don't let it dominate their thoughts. They're able to kind of, as they say, watch the movie of their lives rather than being the star of the movie of their lives.

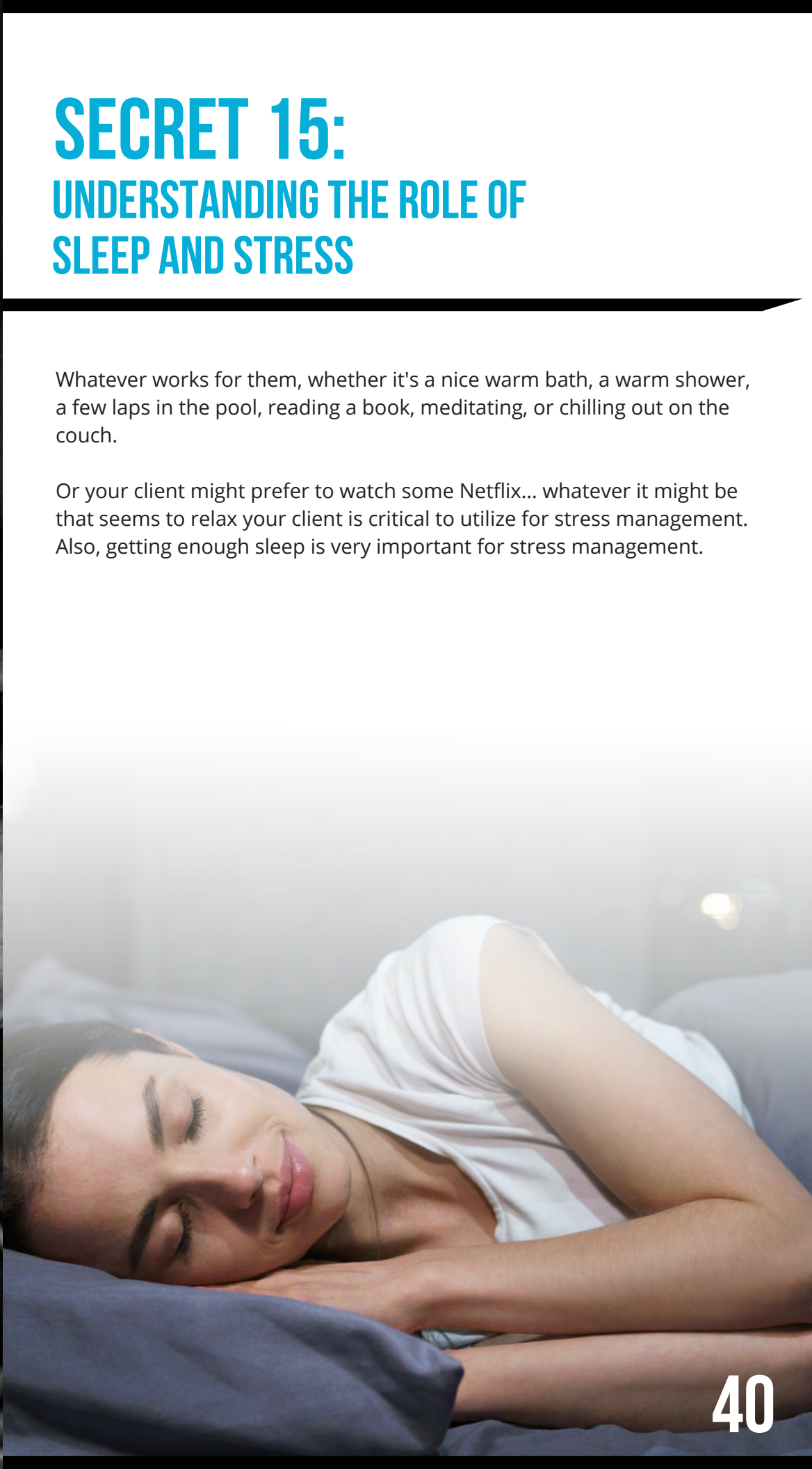
So, it's essential to educate your client on the various stress management techniques available to them.

SECRET 15:

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF SLEEP AND STRESS

Whatever works for them, whether it's a nice warm bath, a warm shower, a few laps in the pool, reading a book, meditating, or chilling out on the couch.

Or your client might prefer to watch some Netflix... whatever it might be that seems to relax your client is critical to utilize for stress management. Also, getting enough sleep is very important for stress management.



SECRET 16:

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM WITH WEIGHT LOSS

How many people do you reduced their body weight over the long term?

Let's say we define success as a 10% reduction in body weight that lasts one to three years. What do you think is a reasonable success rate?

Studies have shown a % of dieters will regain their lost weight within 1-5 years (13,14).

That means if your clients are ordinary people and you take 10% of the total body weight off of 20 of them, only will likely keep that weight off.

It sounds pretty depressing, right? Well, it gets worse

Of the people who regain the weight they lose, between one-third and two-thirds of those people will end up heavier than they started. That means they don't just put on the 10% they lost. They put back on additional weight. Effectively, they take one step forward and two steps back.

While there aren't many studies in this area, what has been done and collected around body fat overshooting or rebounding, was well documented in a paper by Dulloo et al. [15].

This paper was entitled 'How Dieting Makes Some Fatter from the Perspective of Human Body Composition Autoregulation.' They reviewed seven human studies, and the impact of caloric restriction on subsequent weight regain after the subjects finished the diet.

SECRET 16:

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM WITH WEIGHT LOSS

Now after the diet was over, the humans were allowed to eat what's called ad libitum, meaning as much as they wanted. The findings were pretty concerning.

Two studies by Benedict one, looking at total fasting and semi-starvation, looked at outcomes after this total fast or semi-starvation was done and saw that even these short periods of fasting, they saw body fat overshooting of between 2.7 to 3.1 kilograms, meaning they put on in addition to what their weight originally was, 2.7 to 3.1 kilograms of fat more than that.

So, what we can conclude from Dulloo's review of these human studies is that it's pretty clear that if you lose a significant amount of weight, then allow uncontrolled ad libitum consumption to follow, your body is going to seek to regain all the weight you lost and then some.

Second, we can further conclude that the extra weight gained isn't likely of the lean body mass variety.

Perhaps the most important conclusion we can draw from Dulloo's work is that when it comes to weight loss, it's not enough just to lose a bunch of weight.

If the point is to improve health, wellbeing, lifestyle, and appearance, what's the point of losing a ton of weight only to gain back a ton and a half?

This is where the art of compliance coaching is so crucial with your clients.

The habits you teach them will transfer into their lives long past them working with you, so be sure to spend as much time as possible, not just teaching them science but coaching them on healthy behaviors as well!

SECRET 17:

COACHING CLIENTS FOR FAT LOSS

If you're coaching someone for fat loss, it's on you to ensure you're catching your client before they fall and doing what it takes to get them back on their feet. The body is an incredibly adaptive machine, and it will fight your attempts to dial it down with every trick in the book.

A basic coach will calculate calories and macros and give the client a plan. A good coach will be on the lookout for sticking points and sources of noncompliance, and they will constantly be thinking about what to do before these things become a problem for the client.

So, what should you be on the lookout for with your fat loss clients as a coach?

An obvious first problem you may encounter is “stalled” weight loss. For example, you set a sensible deficit, your client follows it to a ‘T,’ to good effect, and four to six weeks in, everything comes grinding to a halt. What happened?

Even if you implemented diet breaks and refeeds, there has almost certainly been metabolic adaptation. Many coaches freak out and overreact at this point. Don't be one of those coaches.

You shouldn't need to reduce calories by more than a 5 to 15% decrease to restart fat loss.

The key is to measure. If you're keeping an eye on your client's weight loss and body composition, as well as their intake and activity levels, you can start to make very well-informed judgments about how their TDEE is changing over time.

You should adapt to those changes on a schedule that suits your client. Tell them ahead of time that adjustments may need to be made if they're already relatively lean, be honest with them.

SECRET 17:

COACHING CLIENTS FOR FAT LOSS

Those adjustments may need to be done weekly as they get leaner and leaner. Collect the data you need to update your course, and you should be able to navigate a stall and fat loss easily.

Now sometimes sh** happens, and your off the rails. An unplanned night out with the boys or a special occasion that leads to overeating. A stressful situation at work. The tub of ice cream with the girlfriends.

These things will delay progress, and delaying progress isn't a good thing, but your clients are also human beings.

Humans make mistakes, and it's crucial to both you and your clients that you understand this. When your client screws up, it's your job to hold them accountable, but accountability only works if you also provide empathy.

So, what I always like to say is empathy and accountability. Meaning you hold the client accountable; you don't let them off the hook, but you also empathize with them.

SECRET 18:

UNDERSTAND COMPLIANCE IS KING

As we've mentioned already, when it comes to the hierarchy of the results pyramid, right at the bottom of the very first foundational layer, we place sustainability and adherence.

In other words... compliance is king!

The thinking here is super straightforward. If you implement the best possible set of interventions for fat loss, what will your results be if you don't adhere to them?

What if you can adhere to it for a short time, but then that adherence isn't sustainable?

It shouldn't be a surprise that results will either not come or won't stay in both scenarios. Either way, you've achieved nothing meaningful, and you may have even reinforced some negative behaviors that may curtail future efforts to lose weight.

You see, humans are pattern-based learning machines. We're very empirical. That means we use information about what's happened in the past to decide what will happen in the future.

Suppose you put an overweight client on a super aggressive calorie deficit with an overly restrictive set of food choices, and that client fails. In that case, you will be adding to their set of empirical data that "dieting doesn't work" or that they can't lose weight for whatever reason.

SECRET 18:

UNDERSTAND COMPLIANCE IS KING

The next time that client is ready to make a change, they will remember what happened when they worked with you, and they're likely not to recognize why they failed because of your unsustainable plan.

Instead, they're going to remember that they tried and failed, so what good is trying, again?

So, it's important not to reinforce this kind of negative thinking, and the easiest way to avoid that is to build your plan around what your client can actually adhere to over the long term. The best laid out plan means absolutely nothing if someone can't stick to it.

SECRET 19:

UNDERSTANDING SUPPLEMENTATION

Whether you're a fan of supplements or not, as a coach or fitness enthusiast, you're going to run into this out in the wild, so it's best to be informed about it.

Do you need supplements? Nope. So, what's there to talk about? Well, as it turns out quite a bit, but maybe not exactly for the reasons, you might be thinking.

Well, first, as a coach, you're going to get asked a lot about supplements, so you need to be well informed.

It's not good enough to simply take a "supplements suck" approach and move on.

Supplement companies have worked very hard to raise their product profile, so regardless of whether or not you like supplements, as an expert in the field, you need to know about them.

Second, it turns out that not all supplements suck. Some really do provide meaningful help towards reaching your fat loss or muscle-building goals. The key is understanding which ones are worth your time.

Not taking the time to explore which supplements can help you or your clients reach their goals means you'll be taking the long road towards your goals, if only slightly longer.

But here's the thing.

Even the most potent supplements only provide modest improvements, and where they do provide benefits, those benefits will be quickly overshadowed by poor diet and exercise. No supplement's going to help you out-train a poor diet.

So, what makes a good supplement? What are we looking for?

SECRET 19:

UNDERSTANDING SUPPLEMENTATION



To be useful, a supplement needs to do at least one or more of the following:

1. Improve lean body mass, and this can be through optimizing muscle protein synthesis or minimizing protein breakdown.
2. Improve recovery because the faster you can recover from training, the more training you can do, and training supports energy balance and triggers muscle anabolism.
3. Increased fat loss, either through increased fat oxidation, decreased fat storage, or both.
4. Improve energy expenditure. This is of particular concern when you're trying to lose fat. If you can get a supplement that increases energy expenditure, you can help tip the energy balance scale towards weight loss.
5. Improve exercise performance. Similar to recovery. The better we perform in the gym, the better our results. Hitting more reps or heavier weights can contribute to more overall overload, driving increased energy balance and muscle anabolism.

SECRET 19:

UNDERSTANDING SUPPLEMENTATION

You may not be a big fan of supplements, and that's fair, but here's my view. If I can safely take something that improves one or more of these factors, then why wouldn't I, as long as it's not egregiously expensive?

There's nothing wrong with using a supplement.

Some of the best supplements you may already be taking, even if you don't think of them as a supplement per se.

Obviously, covering specific supplements is beyond the scope of this eBook.

Still, if you would like to learn more about supplementation and the other topics we have touched on here in-depth, check out my BioLayne Level 1 Nutrition Certification that I created in partnership with Clean Health.

[LEARN MORE & UNLOCK THE CERTIFICATION](#)

SECRET 20:

USE SOFTWARE TO MAXIMIZE THE SCIENCE

Even with all the dietary knowledge that is available today, one of the main reasons so many coaches and gen pop clients shy away from following custom macro plans, and they gravitate more towards interventions such as keto, and intermittent fasting is because, on paper, those plans seem a lot easier to follow.

Proponents of those diets claim that you don't need to track your calories and macros, and you can just eat as much as you like. In reality, they are just banking on the fact that you will naturally drop into a caloric deficit by following their plan.

Ok, suppose we give them the benefit of the doubt.

What happens, though, when your client plateaus?

Are they going to eat even cleaner?

Are they going to fast even longer?

The problem is what you don't measure; you can't track. Even if you are not perfect, tracking imperfectly is still much more helpful than not tracking at all. Yes, it requires more effort, but nothing worthwhile in life generally comes free of putting in the work!

Remember, self-monitoring is one of the most essential aspects of sustainable long-term results.

Having said that, if we have tools at our disposal to make things easier, I am all for that. That I co-founded our coaching app, Carbon Coach, which can make the process of setting up and tracking your food intake much more manageable.

CONCLUSION

Well, that's that!

I hope you enjoyed these 20 critical "secrets" to creating industry-leading evidence-based diets for your clients that get results!

If you are keen to expand your knowledge and take your coaching to the next level, I highly recommend you look at some of my online courses for personal trainers and nutritionists below.

Other than that, see you around the traps!

[ACCESS MY ONLINE COURSES](#)

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