



# **The Top 15 Dieting Mistakes & Myths**



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By Karen Sessions, author of *How to Lose Weight; FOREVER, Iron Dolls, The Competitive Edge, Killer Quads, Dangerous Curves, and The Cellulite Cure.*

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## ***The Top 15 Dieting Mistakes***

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### **Introduction**

Hundreds of misconceptions regarding weight reduction filter in and out of our lives on a daily basis. Pick up any fashion magazine, turn on the television, or simply surf the Internet and you are literally beaten with ads marketing fast weight-loss.

But is fast weight-loss the path to permanent weight-loss? After all, that is what we are truly striving for; taking weight off and keeping it off, not merely one day of water weight-loss. Fast weight-loss, as with any fad diet program, only promises a reduction of water weight, bone mass and lean muscle tissue. All of these are what make your metabolism function properly and when you reduce them (bone mass, water, muscle mass), you will have destroyed your metabolism.

Sadly, most commercial diets only offer temporary weight loss, and in turn, do the person more harm than good. Here, in America, we have millions of diet clinics, *weight-loss foods*, and health clubs from coast to coast. You would think that our health and waistlines would be in better condition. On the contrary, more than half of the population is in poor health and/or overweight. One could say that our country is overfed and undemourished.

**“Last year Americans spent more than \$9 billion on weight loss. This is more than the gross national budget of over 50% of the countries in the world. The staggering figure does not include apparel, all the gym memberships, and the array of products attached to the fitness industry.”**

**Dr. Tony Perrone, Author of *Hollywood’s healthiest diets***

[Permanent weight-loss](#) is the removal of body fat, period. When it comes to shedding body fat, quick fixes will send you down the wrong path. Take a look at a bodybuilder or fitness competitor in the gym or athletes in the current health magazine. They look fit, strong, and powerful. It looks as if their body was just magically blossomed overnight by just lifting a few weights. This is not the case. Many fitness athletes and bodybuilders live a lifestyle of eating clean and exercising regularly. You also have to take into account their genetics. Some people are born gifted in the ultimate body department and some have to work diligently at it.

**Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.**

**~By Jim Rohn**

**With the proper nutritional program, combined with exercise, you can:**

- Lose body fat on a weekly basis
- Slow the aging process
- Lose inches weekly
- Balance hormones
- Train your metabolism to burn calories and fat
- Improve your immune system
- Increase your natural energy
- Improve your self-esteem and well-being
- Eat regularly and not be continuously hungry
- Stop carbohydrate and sugar cravings dead in their tracks
- Balance your blood sugar
- Improve your sleep
- Reduce hypertension
- Reduce hyperlipidemia
- Lower cancer risk
- Reduce the risk of type 2-diabetes
- Reduce and eliminate cellulite
- Improve bone density
- And much, MUCH more

## 15 Mistakes You MUST Avoid to be Successful

### Mistake #1

#### Lacking a Motivating Incentive

When you set out to lose weight you are setting out to change the way you currently are. You will have to change the way you think, the way you eat, and your activity level. All these factors are virtually useless unless you have a motivating incentive.

**Ask yourself a couple of questions:**

1. Why do you want to lose weight?
2. What are the benefits of weight loss?

Do not even attempt weight loss without a good reason because you will be lacking a reason and direction.

### Mistake #2

#### Failure to Plan

Failure to plan. I am sure you have heard this one before. It is the standard nag among the weight loss and fitness community. If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail. Sorry, just had to throw that one in. So cliché, I know. 🙄

If you want to lose weight then your first step is to create a plan and make it specific. Detail your reasons and goals. Outline how you plan to go about losing weight and create a deadline. If you are not precise you will be completely lost. It's like someone telling you to drive from New York and meet them in California without driving directions or a map. All you know is point A and point B, but have no idea how you are going to get there, what it will involve, or how long it will take.

When a soldier fires his rifle, he has a specific target he is aiming for. Without the target he is just shooting aimlessly. You need a target to aim for, too. Design a plan and follow it. This allows you to track your progress and make changes as necessary.

### **Basic Plan Guidelines:**

1. Set a realistic weight and body fat goal.
2. Design an eating and exercise plan to make the goal become a reality.
3. Put a deadline on your plan to make it a contract.
4. Take stats (weight and body fat) every other week.

## **Mistake #3**

### **Failure to Follow the Plan**

Many people fail to lose weight because they fail to actually follow their weight-loss program outlined. This is a big error and I see it all the time. No one gets desired results without proper action.

Many people hire me for online personal trainings and pay me good money for a quality program designed for their stats and activity level. I give them the exact caloric and macronutrient counts based on their needs. Cardiovascular and resistance training programs are outlined in detail as well. Week after week their stats remain the same because he or she did not follow the program, cheated too much, or just made excuses. I know who follows the program and who doesn't. The numbers don't lie.

I actually hate to charge for an eating and exercise program if the client does not follow it. The client is the one being hurt in the long-run. I rather the person wait until he or she is ready and then purchase online trainings.

**To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.**

**~By La Rochefoucauld**

I can tell by the weekly stats if that person has been 100% faithful or not. I am just like Santa Clause; I know when you been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake. My e-clients who do follow the program as outlined lose, on the average, 8 to 10 pounds and/or 4 to 6% body fat a month.

Simply put, you must have a plan and you must have action.

## **Mistake #4**

### **Doing too Much**

Many people jump on the weight-loss bandwagon with an all or nothing approach. While that attitude is good it can also lead to failure, both mentally and physically.

Starting a low calorie, low carbohydrate, low fat diet combined with an hours of cardio, and boat loads of “diet” supplements will cause you to crash and burn quickly. This type of weight-loss format is a setup for failure. While you may lose some scale weight (muscle, bone, and water) in the beginning, it’s only a matter of time before the weight loss ceases and your metabolism shuts down. When this happens, what do you have to fall back on? Nothing. You will be low on energy and have a slower metabolism. As weeks pass, weight loss diminishes, depression sets in, and you give up.

Never fire all your ammunition at once. You should always have something to fall back on. If you start a weight-loss program and lower your carbohydrates, it’s only a matter of time before the body adapts to the change. When this happens you have options. You can lower your calories or increase cardio. Use one method at a time so you know what is working and what isn’t.

## **Mistake #5**

### **Lacking Patience**

I'm sorry, but there is no magic pill, potion, lotion, cream, gizmo, or shock therapy to give you immediate weight-loss. If I could provide that, then I would be a millionaire. Then again, if I could provide that the government would take it away and market it themselves through a doctor's prescription and it would be so expensive that your insurance would have to cover it.

You did not gain weight overnight and therefore you cannot lose it overnight. However, small daily steps in the right direction will take that weight off in time and permanently. This is true weight-loss.

One reason many people are on continual diets is because they jump from one diet to the next, never giving any of them a chance to work. Patience is a virtue. A weight-loss program cannot be given a 3 or 5 day trial. It must be given time to prove itself. A quality weight-loss program will give you some type of results in a week. If you do this consecutively four times a month you will have lost some noticeable body fat, and will feel much better about yourself.

## **Mistake #6**

### **Failure to Choose a Quality Weight-Loss Program**

Not following quality a weight-loss program that teaches lifestyle changes is one of the biggest dieting mistakes. Most people choose to invest in gadget marketing schemes, pills, and other concoctions.

Most people, on average, spend more money on weight-loss paraphernalia than on quality food.

Eating a balanced diet combined with an exercise program is sure to give results. Short cuts only provide short-term weight-loss. Invest in your life, health, well-being, and waistline... Invest in quality food.

## **Mistake #7**

### **Skipping Meals**

Skipping meals is another major mistake many weight-loss enthusiasts do. To lose weight, you must eat like clockwork. Eating should be like a baby on a set timed schedule. For weight loss to be effective, it's necessary to eat a complete and balanced meal every three hours. No ifs, ands, or buts. Just do it. By eating several smaller meals a day your metabolism stays charged and it prevents uncontrollable cravings.

Failure to nourish your body on a consistent basis will result in a slower metabolism, causing the body to hoard fat and burn muscle. Also, when you allow yourself to go hungry you will become irritable and that affects others more than you. Another downfall to skipping meals and getting hungry is that it becomes a lot easier to grab junk food rather than eating your quality meal.

If you get hungry between meals, then that is a sign you are not eating enough for each meal. If you must grab a quick, in between

meal snack, choose something healthy like a hand full of nuts or some fresh vegetables.

## **Mistake #8**

### **Overeating “Diet” Foods**

Many “diet” foods marketed are not as waistline friendly as they may seem. “Diet” foods and snacks such as low-fat crackers, sugar-free cookies, fat-free and sugar-free ice cream, low-carbohydrate goodies, and even protein bars \*gasp\* simply have other additives to take the place of what is removed. This doesn’t make it calorie free or healthy. These are still processed food items and will not promote fat loss just because it’s lacking the “evil” ingredient you are trying to avoid.

Just as your meals should be quality, so should your snacks. Choose fresh and unprocessed snacks so your body can actually use the macronutrients and calories. Empty calories just slow down your metabolism causing you to slowly accumulate body fat.

## **Mistake #9**

### **Lacking Water**

Water is a large part of weight loss, yet many people fail to see this nutritional element as important or necessary. Water keeps the body hydrated. If you fail to consume adequate water, your body will retain water to keep a balance. If you drink water throughout the day your body will flush out toxins and fat, which also helps to prevent bloating.

Water is the most basic part of weight loss, and many people completely overlook this important factor.

**Benefits of water:**

- Serves as a natural appetite suppressant
- Regulates your body temperature
- Removes toxins and wastes
- Assists in digestion
- Transports nutrients
- Lubricates your joints
- Cushions your organs
- Protects vital tissues

However, not just any water will do. Many municipal water supplies are toxic themselves. It would be best to invest in either bottled water or a water filter. You can't beat quality. Buy a filter or become a filter.

Decreasing water intake can cause your fat deposits to increase. The reason for this is the kidneys need ample water to function. When they do not receive enough water then their job is taken up by the liver. The liver aids in metabolizing stored body fat, but when it has to take over the kidney's job, it can't do its job fully. This causes a metabolic downgrade and body fat accumulates. To reverse this, simply drink more water.

Drinking more water can actually decrease water retention. When you deprive your body of this necessary element the body reacts with water retention, preparing for drought. Basically, your body doesn't know when it will receive more water, so it holds on to every drop for survival.

Herbal water pills can offer temporarily relief, but still your best option is to drink more water. I can't say it enough, more water in equals more water out.

For optimal fat loss, be sure to drink plenty of water to keep the organs functionally at 100% and to remove water retention.

## **Mistake #10**

### **Blowing off Exercising**

This is another mistake made by people many, lagging on the exercising. Exercise keeps your heart healthy, keeps your circulation going, releases endorphins, and burns calories. The more you avoid exercise the worse you will feel and the less likely you will do it later today, tomorrow, or the next day.

There will be days you don't feel like working out, but a little bit of something is far better than a lot of nothing. Also, exercising can make you feel better mentally and physically.

Many people are unaware that even minimal exercise can reduce the risk of many diseases, such as cancer, hypertension, type 2-diabetes, and heart disease.

**Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness.**

**~By Earl of Derby**

Exercise comes in two forms, aerobic and anaerobic.

### **Aerobic Exercise**

Aerobic exercise is any activity that uses the large muscle groups in a manner that can be maintained continuously, allowing the heart, lungs, and muscles to work together.

#### **Such aerobic exercises include:**

- Power walking
- Running
- Jumping rope
- Cycling
- Aerobic classes
- In-line skating
- Swimming
- Stair climbing
- The elliptical

Generally those over 22% body fat for years are usually sugar burners, meaning they burn sugar rather than fat, and will benefit greatly from cardio at moderate intensity and longer duration, such as 5-6 times a week for 45 minutes.

Those under 22% body fat will lean more toward the fat burners and will benefit from a combination of High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), and longer duration at moderate intensity. Usually five times a week in a progressive manner works well.

Those ball-parking 15% body fat will benefit from HIIT in a progressive manner. Usually 4-5 times a week works well with one day of long duration at moderate intensity for a break and a shock.

The above are general standards. Everyone is different so tinker with a few approaches and find what works best for YOU.

### **Anaerobic Exercise**

Anaerobic exercise is resistance training. Resistance training uses the muscles for rapid bursts of energy, such as weight lifting and sprinting. These cannot be sustained for long periods of time because oxygen is not the energy source.

Resistance training builds lean muscle mass which is responsible for an increased metabolism and bone density. If you want to lose fat and reshape your body, you NEED to include anaerobic exercise in your program.

## **Mistake #11**

### **Failure to Prepare Meals in Advance**

Another reason for weight-loss failure is not preparing meals in advance. Failure to plan meals can lead to skipped meals, which just descends into a dieting entrapment. Eating haphazardly will never prove fat-loss results. You must feed your body balanced meals on time. You will never see a serious bodybuilder or fitness competitor unprepared in the food department. They go to many extremes to have their designated meal close at hand when meal time arrives. This simple tactic is what makes them such successes in the fat-loss department.

If you choose one day of the week and cook in bulk and package it, you will be less likely to opt for a quick processed meal. Many people find it easy to prepare their meals the night before so it is all squared away and ready to go as they run out of the door in the morning. Whichever way works best for you, just do it. Always be prepared.

## **Mistake #12**

### **Failure to Prepare the Mind**

Prepare your mind for the good and the bad. Stay in control. Certain situations can make you want to eat the wrong foods. Many people are emotional eaters, some eat when bored, some eat when angry, others have to eat when driving or watching television and many eat during stressful situations. Find your weakest link and take control over it. A prepared mind is a strong mind.

Drinking water can take the edge off stressful eating. Also, having quality food prepared will prevent you from grabbing a quick “emotional” fix that you will later regret. Prepare the mind and stay in control. If you are not in control of your body, it’s in control over you.

## **Mistake #13**

### **Not Making Time**

This has to be one of the most common excuses I have heard of. “I just don’t have time.” The average person spends numerous hours in front of the television or computer. Many people find time to do other important and personal things no matter how busy they are. Come on. Is really a lack of time the best excuse you can come up with?

I know people who take better care of their cars than they take care of themselves. I see it all the time, people fueling their cars with super unleaded gasoline because it’s conservative, keeps the engine clean, allows for better performance, yet they fuel their body with pizza, greasy hamburgers, quick candy bars, etc. If you are fueling your body with that non-nutritional junk, how do you think your performance will be as opposed to someone who exercises three to five times a week, eats four to five small nutritional meals a day and takes vitamins and minerals? Everything you do, and most importantly, what you eat and drink, affects your mood, sleep, complexion, hair, and body.

If time management is a factor, then you need to schedule meals and exercise in, just like important business meetings, class schedules, dates, social events, etc. Anyone can find a mere 60 minutes to exercise and prepare meals. Go to bed an hour late or wake up an hour early. I know competitors who are moms, work a full-time jobs, AND compete in physique shows. When you want it bad enough, you will find time.

Do you want to know how I became so successful with bodybuilding? I made it a priority because it was important to me. I worked an 8-5 job. I was tired at the end of the day so I scheduled my workouts in the morning. I was at the gym by 5:00 AM, back home by 6:00 AM, out the door leaving for work by 7:30 AM, and even had time to prepare a fresh breakfast and eat it. I was all bubbly and alert by the time I arrived at work. When I returned home, my workout was out of the way and I was able to focus on relaxing and spending time with my family.

## **Mistake #14**

### **Intimidation**

Intimidation can be a factor that prevents someone from even starting a weight-loss program. It can also be the factor that causes many people to quit. Some people find it too scientific and confusing. I agree. Turn on the television, look in any magazine, or listen to the gossip in the hair salons and you are literally bombarded with tens of thousands of weight-loss approaches. Count calories... Wait, that

went out the window ten years ago with counting fat grams. That's right. This decade is about counting carbohydrates. Oh no! Now we have to figure out carbohydrates and net carbohydrates. Do net calories count? Count them as what, a carbohydrate or a calorie?

I can see the frustration to a beginner. None of it makes sense. But, if you listen to me and get back to the basics and ditch the processed food, you can make some wonderful changes.

Others fear the gym. Those overweight may not want to workout around all the "hard bodies." Come on. Do you think they were born like that? They worked their way from either an overweight or underweight condition. Many athletes in the fitness industry have fought an eating disorder of some kind at one time in their life. You would be surprised at how many were either overweight or suffered binge eating, Anorexia Nervosa, or Bulimia Nervosa.

Surprisingly, many underweight individuals also feel inferior in the gym. They think they don't measure up to all the "hard bodies." Many of those who are underweight purchase home equipment to get in shape before they join a gym.

And speaking of hard bodies, let's stop all the classification and labeling now. Everyone is equal, just different packaging. The good thing is that you can change your package to suit what ever you like.

## **Mistake #15**

### **Making Excuses**

Making excuses is the downfall of many people not making any weight-loss progress. I think many times they are even aware that they are procrastinating. They keep waiting for tomorrow to start the program. The only way you are going to make changes is if you get into action. Start now. Tomorrow is too far off and will put you a day behind. If you want results, step out of the norm, get out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself. What do you have to lose, besides weight?

## ***Dieting Myths***

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### **Break Free From Bad Information!**

Like most people, I am sure you have ventured on a “diet” program and ended up losing some noticeable weight, only to regain it, plus more. Was it a lack of continual willpower or did your body simply adapt to the diet? Isn’t it frustrating to put all your mental time and energy into a program and it just leave you hanging on the wayside, putting you in a worse state from where you initially began?

#### **Do any of the following questions describe you?**

1. Do you exercise religiously and fail to drop another pound?
2. Do you eat virtually spotless and the scale does not budge?
3. Do you continually diet and exercise and fail to see any noticeable changes?

A major downfall to not being able to lose weight is bad information circulation the fitness industry. How many times have you seen the heading on a fashion magazine at the checkout counter reading, “10 Ways to Lose Belly Fat in 10 Days,” or “8 Fat Burning Foods that Increase Energy?” Now really, if these were possible, 90% of the public wouldn’t be overweight or out of shape. Bad information angers me to no end.

Another seemingly friendly place, but which can also be a bad source of information are message boards. Anyone and everyone can post

their “dieting” input on these public forums. Granted, there is good information on many public forums, but a lot of people are merely learning too, and simply re-posting what they previously read. Some can’t even back up what they post.

Do research and know the background of individuals before taking certain “dieting” advice. What’s funny is that many suggesting certain dieting tactics are overweight themselves or not getting results on the program they are currently doing.

### **Carbohydrates Make You Fat**

Natural carbohydrates don’t necessarily make you fat. Carbohydrates are fuel for your body. If you don’t fuel your body, it will burn muscle. Generally, I put most of my e-clients who want to lose fat on a moderate carbohydrate and carb-cycling fat-loss program, and all lose at least 1% body fat a week when they follow it.

Carbohydrates are not the only culprit when it comes to fat loss. There is some skill that goes along with it. You need to feed your body the proper amount of carbohydrates in the proper form, in the proper combinations to ignite fat loss, without sacrificing lean muscle tissue. It can be done. It’s all in applied knowledge.

## Calories

The calorie notion has been tossed around so much that I'm dizzy. People can't seem to make up their minds on this one. Simply stated, those who can't make up their minds don't know. This is why I will say it again, beware of forums. While there is a lot of good information posted, there is also more bad information posted. Know your sources.

### Cut Calories to Lose Weight

Many people support the notion that a caloric deficit diet will prompt weight loss. This can be answered by a simple yes and no answer. Basically, you need to establish your basal metabolic rate (BMR) in order to find a starting point for weight reduction. Begin your caloric content at your BMR with added calories for activity and tweak the calories as necessary. This way, you are eating enough food to fuel and nourish your body and still not overeating.

**Every time you eat you have a chance to either make or break your metabolism.**

**~By Karen Sessions**

When you slice your calories far below your BMR, that's when your body will shut down your metabolism and slip into the starvation defense mode. Simply put, eating below your BMR makes your body hold on to fat and use up muscle and organs for energy. This prevents you from burning any fat at all and leads to malnourishment.

## **Cheating is Disastrous**

When you embark on a fat-loss program you don't have to stop eating what you love cold turkey. If you completely deny yourself of what you desire, the abstinence violation effect (AVE) can be ignited. AVE will cause you to break your program every time, as it's a natural human response when refraining from a negative habitual behavior.

You will find that you will do much better when you allow yourself some guilt-free space to indulge in your favorite treat once a week. Even when preparing for a contest I take one cheat day a week. As the contest approaches, I change that cheat day into a high calorie and high carbohydrate day (re-feed day). This shocking technique really does the metabolism good.

## **Avoid Fruit**

This is like saying avoid taking multi-vitamins and minerals. Fruits are jam packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. You do not, or should not avoid fruit.

Many people suggest fruit is sugar. Yeah, well so are sweet potatoes, brown rice, and oatmeal. The only differences are the chain links. When broken down, all carbohydrates are sugar. Different forms of carbohydrates breakdown faster or slower than others.

Fruit contains fructose, a natural sugar that can be used by the body. If you combine fruit with other food, just as any other natural carbohydrate, it won't elicit a negative insulin spike.

The sugar you should avoid is processed sugar in dairy, bread, pasta, cookies, crackers, ice cream, etc. If it's man-made, you should forget it. As an added note, I would suggest organic fruit when possible.

### **Fat is Fattening**

Fat is a macronutrient, just like protein and carbohydrates. Fat creates balance in a nutrition program, just like protein and carbohydrates. To simply point the finger at fat as being the culprit in weight gain is impractical.

While fat does contain 9 calories per gram, it's also an essential part of weight loss and general health. The problem is that people are choosing the wrong types of fat. Saturated fat is not the evil fat. Processed fat (hydrogenated/trans fat) is the fat that is making people overweight and decreasing their overall health.

What makes you fat is over eating the **wrong** fat, the **wrong** food combination, and **inactivity**. Therefore, fat cannot be solely to blame. A shocking fact is that many overweight individuals are fat-deficient.

## **In Conclusion**

Knowing, and understanding the most common dieting mistakes and how to avoid them will help get you on the road to permanent weight loss.

Remember, weight loss is not an event, it's a journey. Therefore, don't expect to arrive at your destination overnight. Take your time and work on forming healthy habits that will give you long-term results. When you lose fat the right way, you are able to keep it off.

### ***Earned Awards and Placements***

- 1995 Pelican Iron Classic – 4<sup>th</sup>
- 1995 Bayou State Championships – 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 1995 Acadian Extravaganza – 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 1996 Natural Louisiana – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 1996 Bayou State Championships – 4<sup>th</sup>
- 1997 Bayou State Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> and **Overall**
- 1997 Southern Louisiana – 1<sup>st</sup>
- 1998 Louisiana State Bodybuilding Championships – 1<sup>st</sup>
- 1998 Greater Gulf States – 1<sup>st</sup>
- 1999 Louisiana State Bodybuilding Championships – 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 2001 Bayou State Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> and **Overall**
- 2001 Louisiana State Bodybuilding Championships – 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 2007 Preparing



Hello,

I'm Karen Session, also known as MsFit in the weight-loss and fitness industry. I have been involved in exercise science, and nutritional research since 1988.

I have a background in nursing and I'm a certified personal fitness instructor and nutritional counselor with many successes and successful clients. I have trained athletes from ages 18 to 50 in bodybuilding and have helped many who were obese regain control over their eating habits.

I was always interested in fitness, but it became more intense when I had to overcome an eating disorder, Anorexia Nervosa, in my late teens.

After recovery, I pursued bodybuilding shows, placing well and earning several titles, overall placements, and becoming nationally qualified through the NPC, and many natural contests.

I have spent much time researching, studying, and using personal trial and error to come up with the ultimate approach to fat loss, muscle gain, and contest preparation. I have e-clients and myself that are proof that it can be done and that it can be accomplished naturally.

I also have numerous e-books on [weight loss](#), [female bodybuilding](#), [contest preparation](#), advanced [leg training](#), [figure/fitness](#) secrets, and banishing [cellulite](#).

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