Metabolism Supercharge Strategy #5:  
Salt—Not a Health Scourge, But A Powerful Fat Loss and Anti-Aging Ally

Salt-deficient diets have been shown to:

- Promote the release of stress hormones like cortisol, aldosterone, and adrenaline \(^1\) \(^2\) \(^3\)
- Decrease metabolic rate \(^4\) \(^5\) \(^6\)
- Promote inflammation \(^7\)
- Deplete minerals important to proper cell function (magnesium in particular) \(^8\)
- Increase insulin resistance, largely due to increased stress hormones \(^9\)

The benefits of adequate salt intake include:

- An increase in metabolism and cellular energy production
- Decrease in inflammation

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\(^6\) Xavier, A.R., Garófalo, M.A., Migliorini, R.H., & Kettelhut, I.C. (2003). Dietary sodium restriction exacerbates age-related changes in rat adipose tissue and liver lipogenesis. “Taken together, the data indicate that prolonged dietary sodium restriction exacerbates normal, age-related changes in white and BAT metabolism.” *Metabolism*, 52(8), 1072-7.


• Decrease in stress hormones

People who have been taught to take in huge amounts of water and avoid salt, after adopting a higher salt intake very commonly notice improved sleep due to decreased stress hormones. They also often note experiencing a feeling of relaxation and well-being, increased blood circulation, and a warmer body (i.e. that they’re not cold all the time). These effects are all due to decreased stress hormones and a higher metabolic rate.

So how much salt should you consume? And what kind of salt?

Well, what matters is not so much the actual amount of salt, but rather the proportion of salt to water. If you consume lots of water and little salt, you will stress the body—lower body temperature, increased inflammation, rise in stress hormones and lower metabolism. If you consume tons of salt and very little water—like say having tons of pizza, salted French fries, and potato chips while not drinking any water—you can expect to see some of those symptoms of excess salt intake I mentioned. Again, since most people reading this are probably somewhat health-conscious already, they likely consume lots of water and water-rich foods (fruits, vegetables, salads, juices, smoothies, etc.) and small to moderate salt intake. If that describes you, you would likely benefit from significantly ramping up your intake of salt.

As far as what kind, you want to avoid any refined iodized salt. Mined crystal salts are good, though they can sometimes have excessive amounts of metals. Even unrefined sea salts are sometimes contaminated with heavy metals. Based on my research, the best choices are either unrefined sea salt from pristine parts of the oceans, like New Zealand, or Real Salt from Utah.

My recommendations are as follows:

WATER:

Context is critical for determining ideal water consumption, and blanket recommendations like “8 glasses a day” or “1 gallon a day” for everyone are a recipe for trouble. Your water intake should always be dictated by your biology—your cellular need for water, which is based on how much water your body is losing—rather than blanket recommendations. Here’s how you know how much water to drink:

• If you are a person who doesn’t drink any liquid each day, nor eat water-rich foods like fruits, then you might need to increase water intake to some degree.
• On the other hand, if you’re a health conscious person chugging a gallon of water (or two) each day, thinking that’s healthy, you need to chill out a bit.

Also important: Climate (humidity, temperature) and activity level are HUGE factors that determine how much water you should be drinking:

• If you’re running a marathon in the desert, you are losing lots of water and thus you should be drinking a lot of water.
• If you’re in an air conditioned room while sitting at your desk all day, you’re not losing lots of water, so you have no reason to be consuming a gallon of water per day—all that’s doing is
making your kidneys work in overdrive, putting you in stress physiology, and slowing your metabolism.

- If you are doing exercise and sweating, or you’re in a very hot or dry or high (altitude) environment, and you need to drink to prevent dehydration, drink a little extra than you would normally.
- In general, don’t overthink this. When you are thirsty, drink.

**SALT:**

1) *Obey* your salt cravings. You’re body is not dumb—it craves salt when it needs salt!
2) Eat ample amounts of salt (in the neighborhood of 2-5 teaspoons a day if you have symptoms of low metabolic rate, or if you habitually consume lots of water). Note: If you are the person who routinely drinks a gallon of water a day and watches their salt intake, please make changes to salt and water SLOWLY. Don’t drop water intake and dramatically increase salt intake overnight. Give your kidneys time to adjust by doing it over a week or two.
3) Salt your food liberally with salt.
4) Keep your salt in balance to your water intake! The way you do this is very simple: Anytime you consume water, add salt to it. I recommend squeezing lime or lemon into and adding a pinch or three of sea salt to every cup of water. The easiest and best way to do this is to make a lime/lemon water concoction in a ½ gallon jug each day, add a teaspoon or two of sea salt to it. Drink throughout the day and you will be able to drink all you want while avoiding any issues or consuming water out of proportion to salt, and this way, you will only having positive effects on the metabolism.

Follow these principles, and you may just find chronic symptoms like poor ability to regulate body temperature, anxiety, migraines, poor sleep, (and various other symptoms of stress) are greatly alleviated.

Increasing salt intake is very simple, but don’t let the simplicity fool you—this one simple change in diet can have very powerful health benefits for many a health-conscious eater.