

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE #39**. In today's very special episode, I am going to share a little bit more about my own weight loss journey this past year, and exactly how I was able to finally accomplish a goal that has eluded me for more than five years .

Hey there, and welcome back to the Do It Scared podcast! As always, my name is **RUTH SOUKUP**, and I am the founder of Living Well Spending Less and the Living Well Planner, as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy, and the New York Times bestselling author of six books.

And whether you are new and just finding me through this podcast for the first time, or whether you've known me for a while from Living Well Spending Less or Elite Blog Academy—welcome! My hope is that this is a place where you will find new inspiration and motivation to move past the things that are holding you back so you can create a life you love.

In today's episode, our very first episode of the new year, we're going to chat about a topic that is probably on a lot of people's minds this time of year, and that's losing weight. More specifically, I'm going to share a little more about my own weight loss journey, and how I was finally able to accomplish a goal that has eluded me for more than five years—losing 25 pounds and, in the process, getting into the best shape of my adult life.

Now to be fair, I'm not very athletic, so best shape of my life was a pretty low bar, but the losing weight piece was huge for me. If you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you know that in Episode 11 I shared a little bit of my journey up to that point, and specifically how my body image has affected my self confidence. That episode is actually one of the most downloaded Do It Scared podcast episodes of all time, but if you haven't listened yet, and this is a topic that interests you, you may want to check that one out as well. I'll be sure to link to it in the show notes for this episode, which you can find at doitscared.com/episode39.

And while talking about weight loss might seem like sort of an odd topic for this podcast, I actually think it is SO relevant, especially for this time of year. One of the biggest lessons I've learned from this whole journey is just how much our body image and the way we feel about ourselves and our weight affects EVERYTHING else we do! Losing weight and getting in better shape is a huge confidence booster, and that in turn helps us feel more courageous in everything else we do.

But even if you're not at a point where you are wanting or trying to lose weight, I think this episode has a lot to offer just in terms of setting a big goal and then going after it,

and continuing to go after it, even after experiencing setbacks and failures along the way.

Because ultimately, that's what this podcast is all about. It's about having the courage to set big goals and then to keep going, even when we've fallen short, in order to can create a life we love.

Because courage doesn't mean we are never afraid. Instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It is putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where the path will lead us.

Okay, so one more quick thing before we dive into all the practical application today's episode—As always, I've got a great little download that you can grab that will outline all the practical strategies I'll be sharing with you today. You can get it, along with our shownotes, by visiting DoltScared.com/episode39. Once again, to get the shownotes and the corresponding download for this episode, simply visit [**DoltScared.com/episode39**](https://DoltScared.com/episode39).

And while I'm handing out instructions, the other thing I want to make sure I do is invite you to follow me on Instagram. It's the place I share daily thoughts and inspiration, and the one social media account that I manage personally, which means it is also the best place to message me directly with your feedback, comments and questions! You can find me at [@RUTHSOUKUP](https://www.instagram.com/RUTHSOUKUP)—that's r-u-t-h-s-o-u-k-u-p.

Alright, with that out of the way, let's dive in!

So several months ago, in episode 11, I got brutally honest about my own struggles with my weight and my body image, and about how it had been affecting my self-confidence. I shared how I was pretty mortified when I got on the scale on Christmas day and discovered that I weighed 20 pounds more than I had at nine months pregnant.

But it wasn't just that I didn't recognize myself in the mirror, or that my clothes didn't fit. It was that I didn't feel good about myself. My self-confidence had tanked and I was hiding. It was affecting my business and my friendships and even my marriage.

And I realized that if I wanted to achieve all these other goals that were important to me, I was going to have to get a handle on my weight.

And so I set a goal to lose 25 pounds and to get into the best shape of my life.

And for the first few months of the year, I was ON FIRE. I started weight training 3 days a week, plus running 3 days a week. I signed up to run a 10K on my 40th birthday, and I started having healthy pre-made meals delivered from Bistro MD. They were delicious, and I was feeling great, and in the first 3 months, I lost 17 pounds.

And then.....I ended up with a stress fracture, which was incredibly deflating. Soon after that, I had several big trips right in a row, and the weight started to creep back on. Then we went to Washington State for the summer, where we lived in a hotel over the most delicious restaurant in town. By that time, my willpower was completely shot.

I gained back every single pound I had lost.

When we got back in August, I was ready to get serious. Keto was something several of my friends had raved about, and I had also watched a documentary several months earlier called the Magic Pill that intrigued me. I have to admit that I was pretty nervous, just because it seemed so overwhelming and like it would be so much work.

But I also knew something had to give. As it turns out, it was the best decision I made in 2018.

For me, the Keto diet has been incredible. It has completely changed my life—not just what I eat, but my energy levels and even my whole relationship with food. It is truly the first diet that I've ever been on that I feel like I could easily stick with for the rest of my life. I love the food, I love the way I feel, and I never feel deprived.

My husband has also been doing Keto with me since August, and it has been pretty incredible for him as well—he lost more than 30 pounds and is now the lowest weight he's ever been since we've known each other. He's also SO much happier and more energetic, which has been really amazing for our marriage. Now the one thing I will say is that Chuck doesn't love this way of eating quite as much as I do, and the two of us have definitely each taken our own approach to this whole diet, so later on I will talk about what he has done differently than me

So for the rest of this episode, I just want to dive in and go over some of the essential steps for getting started with Keto, because I know it can seem pretty complicated at first. I'll also share a few tips that have really helped me, along with some of my favorite resources, which I will also link to in the show notes.

The **FIRST STEP** in the process is to **GET CLEAR ABOUT WHAT KETO ACTUALLY MEANS, AND HOW IT WORKS.**

So first of all **WHAT IS KETO?**

The Ketogenic diet, also known as Keto is basically just a high-fat, moderate protein, low carb diet. It is designed to force your body start to burn fat for fuel instead of sugar, which is a metabolic state known as ketosis. When your body is in ketosis it is converting fat to fuel.

And just as an aside, one thing that is important to note is that ketosis is very different than something called Ketoacidosis, which is a very serious complication of diabetes. Because they sound the same, a lot of people get the two confused and think that ketosis is dangerous, but that's not true. Ketoacidosis IS dangerous.

Ketosis is not at all dangerous.

Okay so now that we're clear about what Keto is and is not, let's talk about how you get started, because that is probably the hardest and most confusing part.

Once you cut out carbs from your diet and switch to this high fat, moderate protein, super low-carb way of eating, it takes about 5-7 days for your body to start producing ketones and to get into ketosis. The easiest way to find out whether or not you've made it into ketosis is to use the urine testing strips that you can buy on amazon for less than \$10. The darker they are, the more ketones you are producing.

SO there are some good things and some bad things about this initial stage of keto. The good part is that most people lose weight fairly quickly during this initial transition period, because your body starts retaining a lot less water. So you'll see movement on the scale, and even if it is just water weight, that is always encouraging! The other good part about this transition period is that you really don't have to count calories or anything, so you don't feel super deprived. You can eat whatever you want, as long as you stay below 20 grams of carbs for the day.

The bad thing about this transition period is that it is kind of a big deal for your body to switch from sugar to fat burning, which means there is a strong likelihood that you will feel like crap!

It's called the Keto Flu, and it can be pretty miserable—nausea, headaches, no energy.

Thankfully there is a way to combat the Keto flu, and that is by drinking something called keto lemonade, which is basically water with added salt, lemon juice, and aloe vera juice. It replenishes your electrolytes quickly and it helps a LOT.

After you have transitioned into ketosis, it takes around 5-6 weeks for your body to become what's called Fat Adapted. And basically once you get into the fat-adapted phase, life is AWESOME. I knew right away when it happened because it was almost like a switch went off, and suddenly I felt amazing and had SO much energy, and I also didn't really ever feel hungry.

Once you are fully fat adapted, most people find that they can add a few more carbs into their diet and still stay in ketosis, which is nice.

However, once you are in the fat-adapted phase you can't use the urine strips anymore because while your body will still be producing ketones, they will no longer be excreted in your urine. At that point, the only really accurate way to test for ketones is through blood testing, which you do with a machine that is very similar to the blood glucose meters used by diabetics. You prick your finger and then put a drop of blood on the testing strip.

The whole blood testing thing is probably the weirdest part of doing keto, and I can tell you that not everyone does it. I like it, partly because I love measuring things, but

also because it has helped me have a better understanding of my own body and how many carbs I can tolerate, because that is different for everyone.

For me, I know that I can have a glass or 2 of wine or some dark chocolate or other foods that are slightly higher in carbs without any issues, and that's really nice.

Two of the best resources I found for getting a better understanding of Keto and exactly how it works are the books *The Keto Diet* by Leeann Vogel, as well as *Keto Clarity* by Jimmy Moore. And once again I'll be sure to link to those in the Show notes!

So that's step 1—get clear about what Keto is and how it works.

STEP 2 is to **FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU CAN EAT (AND THEN MAKE A PLAN)**

And I'll be honest, this is the part that kept me from trying Keto for so long. I was so worried that it was going to be super complicated, or that I wouldn't be able to eat anything, especially since I already have dietary restrictions because I don't eat meat or chicken, only fish.

How was this even going to work?

And it wasn't just the figuring out what to eat part that felt overwhelming, but also trying to keep track of all the macros to make sure I was getting the right amount of fat and protein at carbs.

And for the first week, I probably did go a little overboard with planning out my meals and tracking everything, but then I quickly realized that it is really pretty easy to stay keto without that much effort.

It's basically just having the right foods around—low carb vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower and zucchini, cheese, eggs, and then lots of fat—olive oil, coconut oil, butter, mayonnaise, sour cream, heavy cream, etc. One big change that I did make in my own personal diet was adding bacon. So now I am a keto pescatarian who eats bacon, which makes absolutely zero sense but whatever!

I found that I could order quite a few different foods & specialty items like cauliflower pizza crusts, low-carb crackers, and xanthan gum, which thickens soups without flour, online on Amazon, and I also like stocking up at Trader Joes for things like cauliflower rice, specialty cheeses, and frozen seafood.

Before I started Keto I ordered at least five different cookbooks, but the one that I use way more than any of the others is called *The One Pot Ketogenic Cookbook*. The recipes are so easy and so basic and so good—things like broccoli cheddar soup, shrimp alfredo with zucchini noodles, clam chowder, cheesy cauliflower rice, creamed spinach, avocado egg salad, and so much more. I really can't say enough good things about that one.

My kids are not on Keto, but they do eat a lot of keto stuff because when I cook dinner, I cook one meal for everyone. But the great part is that the food is SO good that it really isn't an issue. The only thing my really balked was the Keto pizza, so on pizza night I make ours keto and they have a pre-made frozen pizza.

At this point I probably now have 20-25 different really good go-to dinner options that we rotate through, which is plenty for us because no one in my family really minds eating the same things. I do try to add at least one new thing in each week, but our menu is more limited because of my weird diet restrictions. If you eat meat and chicken, you would easily have far more options to choose from!

These days I do most of the cooking, at least for dinner, which is a big shift for us. When my husband retired 5 years ago to become the stay-at-home dad, it became his job to take care of dinner. But he hates cooking dinner, and he is not at all a meal planner, so more often than not, we would end up going out to eat, which is probably why we both started gaining so much weight!

And so I knew that if we were going to do Keto, I was going to have to be the one to cook. And the thing is I actually love to cook, but most days I would come home SO exhausted from work that the last thing I would want to do is cook! One of the biggest things I really love about keto is that I have so much more energy now, and I don't get that afternoon crash like I used to. So now coming home to make dinner is actually a pleasure. I pour a glass of wine, put on some relaxing moment, and just enjoy that little moment to myself in the kitchen. It has been so nice!

My routine for figuring out our meals each week is to plan my schedule on Friday, which I've talked about before, I think in Episode 15, and then on Saturday or Sunday I will sit down with my cookbooks and my favorite recipes and plan our dinners for the week, as well as lunches for Chuck and myself. Most of the time we can just do leftovers for lunch, but sometimes we will do something else like egg salad lettuce wraps or tuna wraps, or keto bagels with cream cheese (which are SO good). I usually also plan for one night out—either a family night or date night, but I'll talk more about eating out in a little bit.

So for us, a typical week's worth of dinners might include the following: Broccoli & Cheese Frittata on Sunday, Creamy Dill Mushroom soup on Monday, Taco Salad on Tuesday, Steak (for them) & Salmon (for me) with Creamed Spinach & Cauliflower Rice on Wednesday, Bacon Cheeseburger Skillet on Thursday, Pizza on Friday, and dinner out on Saturday.

Then, once I've put together the plan, I will make our shopping list, which Chuck is then responsible for getting from the grocery store. If it was me shopping I would probably just go and get everything for the whole week all at once, but my husband has a strange obsession with Publix and likes to go every day, so I break up the list by days so that he knows what to get on each day. And then when I get home, all the food is there, and all I have to do is cook it, which is awesome!

For those of you who don't have a Chuck to do your grocery shopping, you may want to consider taking advantage of grocery delivery services such as (?) or grocery pickup, which more and more grocery stores are starting to offer.

But figure out what you can eat, and what you are going to eat, then make sure you have a plan so that you're never without keto friendly options.

And then finally, **STEP 3** is to **MAKE KETO WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR LIFESTYLE**.

There is a lot of customization that you can do when it comes to Keto, but the most important thing is to make sure it is working for you and your lifestyle so that it is a long term solution, and not just another fad diet.

Because while you will have that initial dramatic weight loss, what you'll be losing in those first couple of weeks is just water weight, which means that if you quit, you will gain it back.

For SUSTAINABLE weight loss, you need to be burning fat, not losing water, and that means you'll have to commit for the long haul, not just for a week or two.

But the good thing is that there are lots of ways you can customize your experience so that you don't feel deprived, so that it does feel like a lifestyle and not just a diet.

Like I mentioned earlier, my husband and I have both been doing Keto since August, but it has looked different for each of us.

One thing that I've adopted that Chuck has not is something called Intermittent Fasting. Instead of breakfast, I start most days with a fat coffee, which is also sometimes called bulletproof coffee, which for me is 1 tablespoon butter, 1 tablespoon coconut or MCT oil, 1 tablespoon heavy cream, a splash of vanilla extract, some pink salt, and a lot of cinnamon. It sounds gross but you blend it up it just tastes like a delicious creamy latte (but less sweet). Then I generally don't eat until lunchtime, or sometimes until dinner if I'm not hungry, and then I eat a nice big dinner.

Chuck on the other hand will eat whenever and also snack quite a bit during the day. He also thinks fat coffee is disgusting.

Additionally, one adjustment that he has made that hasn't worked for me is that he will take regular cheat days. Every 2 weeks or so he'll take a day off and eat bread and beer and sugar and whatever else he's been craving.

After seeing his success (since he has lost more than 30 pounds and is now at his goal weight) I decided to try that too, even though I wasn't really having many cravings like was. It was a disaster for me—I went up 3 pounds and really struggled to get back down. So no more cheating for me!

Luckily for me though, I'm not actually tempted to cheat the way that Chuck has been. In fact, the best part for me about Keto is that it doesn't really require any willpower.

The food is awesome and I don't have to count calories. I never feel deprived. And I've realized just how important that is for me, because I with my job, I do travel quite a bit, which means that I eat out quite a bit.

In the past, when I've tried to lose weight, I can sometimes manage to be strong while I'm home and in total control of my diet, but as soon as I get on the road, eating in good restaurants with good wine, I don't have any willpower left to be good. I end up making bad choices and eating way too much, and then, because I've already screwed everything up, I just end up giving up.

But with Keto, it's pretty easy to eat out, and not only that, to eat out and get to eat really, really yummy food! I'll eat cobb salad with shrimp instead of chicken and ask for extra dressing, or I'll do a ceasar salad with salmon, or sometimes even fettucini alfredo with broccoli instead of noodles. And it is SO GOOD. The only restaurant that was really challenging was an Asian restaurant, and they ended up just making something special upon request.

I love that I can eat out or go on a trip and it's never a big deal. I will say that I think one of the biggest reasons I'm not tempted to cheat is that the foods I most often crave are actually okay on Keto—I love cheese and avocado and eggs and wine, so I never really feel like I'm missing out.

Whew, so I know that was a LOT of very specific details about Keto and exactly what steps to take if you are thinking about taking that leap. Basically, it comes down to three: first, understand what keto is and how it works. Second, figure out what you are going to eat and have a plan. Third, make it work for you and your lifestyle.

Simple right? But so often weight loss is anything but simple, and while I am so, so, SO excited that I have finally hit upon the thing that works for me, and while I would also encourage ANYONE struggling with weight loss to give keto a try, as I look back on the year, I can't help but be reflective on what got me to the point where I was able to have success with keto.

And honestly I always come back to my why. I fell off the wagon HARD this summer, and in the past, that would have been reason enough for me to quit for a very long time.

But because I was SO in tuned with my why, I knew that I couldn't quit. I had to keep trying. I had to find a way to make this goal a reality. I just had to keep going, no matter what.

And ultimately, that is the secret of accomplishing any goal. Keto might not be the weight loss solution that works for you, but if it's not, keep trying! Try something else and recommit to finding what does work.

In the end the only difference between the people who succeed and the people who fail is that the successful ones refuse to quit.

Okay, so don't forget that if you would like the worksheet that goes along with this podcast—that will walk you through the steps I shared and also include links to the resources I talked about, you can get it, along with our show notes, at doitscared.com/episode39. Once again, that's doitscared.com/episode39.

Before we go, I just want to say, as always, that I LOVE hearing from you! If you have any questions about what we talked about today, or any other topics that you would like to see addressed on the Do It Scared podcast, please feel free to reach out, either via email or just by messaging me on Instagram.

And that about does it for this episode of the Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup podcast! Thank you so much for joining me today! If you liked what you heard, you can leave a review on iTunes, or, better yet, share this episode on your Insta story and tag me to let me know! If I repost your story, we'll send you a do it scared t-shirt just for fun!

Also, be sure to subscribe, either on iTunes or Stitcher or wherever you like to listen, to be notified of new episodes!

And speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week as we continue our New Year, New You theme and talk to weight loss guru Nagina Abdullah about a completely different approach to losing weight. If you're not sure that Keto is the right fit for you, then Nagina's advice might right up your ally!

I'll catch you then!