

33 Power Foods



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CONTENTS

Fundamental Fat Burning Principles.....	03
Fat Burning Foods.....	06
Slimming Foods.....	11

Fundamental Fat Burning Principles

If you're overweight, and you feel like it's your fault, you need to tell yourself that this is just your current condition and not a personality trait. However, you also need to be aware that it is absolutely possible to lose your excess fat, and maintain a weight where you feel healthy and comfortable in your own skin. The weight that you lose will give you back your self-confidence.

In general, gaining weight is linked to an unsuitable diet. In order to solve this problem, it's very important to be aware of the impacts of harmful dieting habits, and to begin to consume healthy ingredients which are good for you instead.

If you're looking for a way to regain some energy and enthusiasm, reading this guide will show you how to lose between 3 and 4 kg (7-10 lbs) per month, in a pleasant and safe way. Unlike a lot of diets, here you won't feel like you're being restricted.

But why does our body have a natural tendency to store fat?

This is a trait which we inherited long ago, passed down from our ancestors, who lived in caves and had to hunt and forage to survive; not knowing how or being able to store the food they gathered, they had to consume them immediately, and store them in the form of fat in their bodies.

This fat, which was collected and stored all the way through periods of good weather, enabled them to survive through the winter periods. Women stored more fat to support their own needs, as well as those of their children.

Our bodies have retained this age-old principle, even though we no longer live in caves.

The amount of fat cells we're born with depends on our ancestors; it's a genetic characteristic. We might assume that if we possess a lot of them, it's because our ancestors were amongst the largest and fattest members of their tribe; this gave them the greatest chance of survival, and was an advantage at the time.

Unfortunately, it's impossible to get rid of fat cells, and to complicate things further, your body may generate new fat cells according to your diet, which will never disappear.

But don't worry, this doesn't mean that gaining weight is permanent, and it doesn't mean that we will automatically get fat. In order to understand this properly, you need to visualize fat cells as being like little balloons. When you burn the fat which fills up these tanks, it's like emptying the air out of a balloon. When you lose weight, you're burning the fat which makes these cells too large, so they shrink.

If you try very radical low calorie diets, you will definitely notice rapid weight loss, but the weight that you've lost tends to come back in the long term.

This problem comes from the fact that humans are genetically protected from the effects of famine. In fact, when confronted by a shortage of food, our bodies slow our metabolism down, which enables us to survive while consuming less energy.

The mechanism which regulates all of this is managed by the hypothalamus, which is a component of the brain. When it's working properly, the hypothalamus aims to maintain a fixed body weight, which is at a "predetermined level". As a reference point, the hypothalamus uses the weight which corresponds to the consumption level which is right for us, and to which we have become accustomed.

Our metabolism regulates our calorie consumption requirements. If we subject our bodies to a diet which is too drastic, our bodies are going to assume that we are in danger because of the lack of food. The body's reaction will be to slow down our metabolism in order to save itself from the famine it is experiencing. The consequence is therefore inevitable: we won't lose any more weight. We will automatically feel hungrier and start to eat again, which prevents the diet from working.

There is just one way to offset the slower metabolism linked to a diet: radically changing the nutritional makeup of the food that you eat. By reducing the total number of calories, and especially the amount of these which comes from sugar, processed foods and unhealthy fats, you will avoid the drawbacks we have just talked about.

An efficient weight loss program requires you to regulate your food intake in a controlled way which, as a consequence, reduces calorie consumption. By eating less fat, sugar and processed foods and increasing your level of activity, you will be able to burn more fat.

If you want to experience manageable weight loss which lasts for life, you can get there by changing the type of food that you eat, which will enable you to absorb less

fat while still maintaining the same levels of vitamins, minerals, trace elements, carbohydrates and proteins, which are necessary for maintaining your body's health.

If you carry on like this, your brain will think that all of its nutritional demands are met, and it won't experience the sensation of famine which comes from depriving yourself.

This can only happen by reducing the amount of processed foods, unhealthy fats and sugars in your diet, and by replacing it with plant-based food, which is naturally low in calories and rich in essential nutrients.

In fact, plant-based foods decompose at a slower rate, which will give your stomach a longer lasting sense of satisfaction. They're also rich in minerals, vitamins, trace elements, proteins and carbohydrates, which are essential for muscular development and energy levels. Your body will therefore be able to burn the excess fat that your body is storing in reserve.

The advantage of this method is that you will feel much more satisfied, because you will be able to eat more, while absorbing less fat, and fewer calories.

Fat burning ingredients

It's important to understand that when the stomach is properly full, you will no longer feel hungry, so it's easier to achieve weight loss. However, for this to be effective, you have to consume foods which – when consumed in equal quantities – act more efficiently than others.

Some foods which are rich in nutrients also have distinctive fat-burning capabilities, which have been proven by scientific research.

Below, we have listed the foods which fall into this category. As well as being good for your body fat percentage, they also boast special capabilities which can help your body to melt away any unhealthy fat.

These foods can be incorporated into any sensible diet, because they cause your body to accelerate your metabolism, which enables it to get rid of any excess fat faster.

Unlike most sensible diets, which recommend that a minimum of 1,200 calories should be consumed per day, Dr Charles Klein recommends that you consume a larger amount, around 1,500 to 1,800 per day. He states that you will be able to lose just as much weight if you consume this amount of calories, without putting your health at risk.

Now let's take a look at the foods with the incredible properties of maximizing your bodily functions by providing it with a clean, efficient energy source, and getting rid of the desire for junk food.

Grapefruit

This food should feature regularly in your diet. If you find it too bitter, you could sprinkle it with cinnamon instead of sugar.

According to Dr James Cerd at the University of Florida, it is a factor in lowering cholesterol and burning fat. It turns out that grapefruit, which features in a number of traditional diets, provides, on average, 74 calories, and contains an impressive amount of pectin (15 grams); this is a special type of fiber which has a reputation for reducing fat and cholesterol. Grapefruit does not contain any fat or sodium, and is also rich in vitamin C

The large amounts of galacturonic acid that it contains adds to the cholesterol- and fat-fighting effect.

There are also further benefits, such as a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and hardened arteries (atherosclerosis).

Apples

Everyone has heard of the saying “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”. It would indeed seem that apples have fantastic abilities such as helping the body to burn fat.

Apples contain no saturated fat, and therefore no cholesterol, and they don't contain any sodium either. They contain just 81 calories, and just one of their many qualities is the ability to lower blood pressure and reduce the levels of cholesterol already present in the blood.



These are also one of the largest sources of soluble fiber that you can find at the grocery store. Dr James Anderson, of the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, says that this type of fiber can help you prevent feelings of hunger, and protect against sudden drops and changes in blood sugar levels.

One final point is that after eating an apple, your blood glucose levels (glycemia) are increased and maintained at a relatively high level for a longer time than with most other foods. This has a direct effect on how full you feel, as scientific studies have observed.

Spinach

It's not a myth: according to epidemiologist Richard Shekelle at the University of Texas, spinach really is rich in iron, but also in vitamin C and E and beta-carotene. Spinach reduces cholesterol and fat levels by activating your metabolism. Furthermore, it gives you almost every nutrient your body needs.

Coffee

According to Dr Judith Stern at the University of California (Davis), the caffeine that coffee contains can increase your metabolism. So, you could say that coffee is a metabolic accelerator.



But be careful! As we all know, excessive caffeine consumption has undesirable effects such as insomnia and anxiety. So, you should drink coffee in moderation, and settle for one cup in the morning and one in the afternoon, so that you don't put your health at risk. It's also better to drink it without adding sugar, and use skimmed milk if you take your coffee with milk.

Several studies have shown that coffee increases the amount of calories you burn by 10%, due to caffeine's effects as a stimulant.

Soup

Eating traditionally prepared homemade soup great for your health, and also contributes to weight loss.

A recent study carried out in Houston (Texas) by Dr John Foreyt, at the Baylor College of Medicine, has shown that people who followed a diet which included a bowl of soup before lunch and dinner experienced more significant weight loss than those who followed the same diet but without the soup. He also noted that weight loss was proportional to the amount of soup consumed! In addition to this, the people who ate soup maintained their weight loss for a longer period of time.

Naturally, this is only true of vegetable soup without cream or red meat.

There are lots of recipes for soup, but here's one which you should try (recipe for 6 portions):

Blend a zucchini, three carrots, four stalks of celery, a yellow squash, and three large onions, and put them into a cooking pot, adding two low-salt chicken stock cubes, a glass of white wine (optional), and three cans of chopped tomatoes. Season with basil, tarragon, oregano, garlic, and thyme, then bring to the boil and simmer for around one hour.

Mustard

Dr Jeya Henry, at Oxford Brookes University in England, has provided evidence that hot mustard has an accelerating effect on our metabolism. The effect is similar to that produced by medicine which contains ephedrine, and by caffeine. Spicy mustard is often used copiously in Indian, Mexican, and Oriental cooking, so you will be able to find it easily in Asian food stores or specialty grocery stores.

Dr Henry also added that “mustard is risk-free, and can therefore be used on a daily basis. It’s also a natural product which is really effective. It’s surprising to see that the acceleration in metabolism which results from its consumption can last for several hours, and reach up to 25% more than normal.”

Wholegrain bread

As with potatoes, bread isn’t an ingredient which makes you gain weight in itself. It’s more what you have with it, such as cheese, margarine or butter, which is bad. You just need to compare the number of calories in 100 grams of bread (400 calories) to that of the same amount of fat (900 calories) to see this.

Researchers at the University of Michigan have observed that certain types of bread can often reduce your appetite. In fact, the people who consumed high fiber wholegrain bread (2 slices per day) were likely to be hungry less often throughout the day, and were able to lose 2kg/4.4lbs in 2 months. Other people, who consumed brown bread, felt more hungry and observed no weight loss over the same period, because of a higher level of consumption of fatty foods.



Dr Bjarne Jacobsen, a Norwegian researcher, has shown that people who ate bread at a rate of 2 slices per day weighed on average 4kg/9lbs less than others who consumed a lot more.

So, we can conclude from these studies that in order to effectively exploit bread during a diet, you should eat brown bread which is high in fiber, such as wholegrain, granary, rye, oat, etc. The number of calories provided by a slice of wholegrain bread is between 60 and 70. The complex carbohydrates in the bread form one of the best energy sources you can give your body.

Brown Rice

In the 1930s, a diet aimed at weight loss created by Dr William Kempner, Duke University, North Carolina (Durham), made rice the basis of the dieting program. Fruit and vegetables were then progressively added to this foundation.



The results of this program for weight loss were spectacular, and showed that brown rice was good for your health, having a positive impact on liver disease and blood hypertension.

Like bread, wholegrain rice is better for you than white rice. A 150g portion of rice contains around 178 calories, which is one third of the amount of calories present in cheese or beef.

Chili peppers

Dr Henry studied hot chili peppers, and noted that they work in a similar way to their close relatives, mustard.



The heating effect noted by the professor when a very small amount of chili (3 grams) was added into a meal of 766 calories hugely and efficiently accelerated the metabolism.

Their impact is even more interesting when you consider the fact that you need very little chili to work effectively.

Chili peppers have other surprising properties, such as their high calcium, iron, phosphorous, magnesium, and vitamin A and C content. They're also very high in fiber, have a low sodium content, don't contain any fat, and have just 24 calories per cup.

Slimming foods

The aim here isn't to try and make you believe that you can manage to lose weight by limiting what you eat and settling for a small amount of food, even if it is delicious and sufficiently nutritious.

At the end of this guide, we have listed a list of foods which have a reputation for being fat-burning, and which will complement the foods which have already been listed.

Perhaps you've also taken up the bad habit of often snacking on foods which are bad for your health. You will need to change this habit if you want to slim down. Practically all of the foods that we have listed in this chapter have enough flavor and crunch to make them a good substitute when you want to make a light meal or afternoon snack.

As you will see, they offer a large range of textures and flavors, which will enable you to vary each meal. In addition to this, they will provide your body with a range of minerals, vitamins, proteins, and lots of other essential nutrients.

Beans

Beans make up one of the best plant-based protein sources.

Research carried out in the Netherlands and at the University of Kentucky has shown that regularly consuming beans has the power to reduce cholesterol levels.

Peas and the most common types of beans (grouped under the term legumes) provide on average 215 calories per cup when they're cooked; some types, such as Lima beans, contain up to 260.



Despite being low in sodium and plant-based protein, they are nevertheless high in potassium. Bean proteins are not complete proteins, so you will need to combine them with whole grains (barley, rice, corn, or wheat), to benefit from the amino acids present in complete proteins. Then, you will get a dish which is high in protein, but a lot less fatty than meat.

To solve the inconvenience of the gas which can come from eating a lot of beans, let them soak for a minimum of 4 hours before cooking them.

Buckwheat

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences has carried out studies which demonstrate that diets which include buckwheat enable you to obtain greater resistance to diabetes, better blood sugar regulation, and a lower cholesterol level.

You can use buckwheat flour to make bread, pancakes, etc., but you can also prepare and consume it in the same way as you would barley or rice: boil 2 to 3 cups of water, add grains of buckwheat, cover the pan and leave to simmer for 20 minutes, lowering the flame (you could also leave this until all of the water has evaporated). One cup of cooked buckwheat contains around 155 calories.

Carrots

Carrots are obviously an inescapable type of food in a good diet. One carrot contains on average 55 calories, and huge amounts of nutrients. For example, the beta-carotene which gives it its orange color is a powerful cancer-fighting nutrient (provitamin A).



You can add carrots to your sauces (for pasta or rice) or chop them finely and add them to soups, so that you can enjoy its natural sweetness (and you won't have to add any sugar!).

When combined with oranges, parsnips, potatoes, lemon juice and broccoli, or even lamb, you will get delicious meals. Feel free to use spices such as dill, nutmeg, tarragon or cinnamon to take the flavor to the next level.

Broccoli

Broccoli has an impressive nutritional value, and is often considered to be the most useful vegetable in the battle against different forms of cancer.

According to one survey, broccoli is America's favorite vegetable. It contains no fat, but does provide a number of organic compounds which are renowned for being

anticarcinogenic (indoles, carotene). It is also high in fiber and calcium, and contains 21 times the recommended daily intake of vitamin C!

When choosing your broccoli, check that the little florets have a dark green color (not yellow), and that the stems are firm.

Chicken

Chicken is a great source of iron, protein, zinc and niacin. It's low in calories, with 100g chicken containing just 245 calories, as opposed to red meat which contains 285 for the same quantity of meat.

Experts recommend leaving the skin on for cooking, so that the meat doesn't dry out, but removing it before eating.

Berries

Researchers in the UK have shown evidence for the high level of insoluble fiber in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, which reduces the absorption of the calories present in food, and which therefore maintains nutritional benefits while promoting weight loss.

Berries contain fructose (a natural sugar), which satisfies your sweet tooth, and a high enough amount of fiber to stop you from absorbing too many calories.



Berries are the perfect food for losing weight, and on top of this, they also contain a large amount of potassium, which contributes to blood pressure regulation.

The number of calories provided by berries is very low: 45 for a cup of strawberries, 74 for the same amount of blackberries, 60 for raspberries, and 81 for blueberries.

Barley

Barley is a hugely nutritious grain, and can be a great replacement for potatoes or rice. Just one cup of (cooked) barley contains 170 calories. It also supplies a considerable amount of fiber and protein, and only a small amount of fat. Many

stories have been told of how gladiators chose to eat barley rather than meat to build up their strength.

Studies carried out at the University of Wisconsin have demonstrated that barley could reduce cholesterol levels by up to 15%, and contain powerful anticarcinogenic agents. Other research in Israel has shown that it is very effective in treating constipation (more effective than classic laxatives) and that it could also promote weight loss.

You could use this instead of rice in your salads, in stuffing, or you could add it to stews and soups. Barley can also be used in the form of flour to make muffins, bread, etc.

Corn

Corn suffers from a bad reputation of being a food which doesn't have much nutritional value. This isn't true, because corn seeds contain a good amount of zinc, potassium, iron, and just 178 calories per cup of cooked corn.

In Nebraska, university researchers have noted that corn proteins are very high quality.

Dr Virgil Brown (Mount Sinai Medical School) has studied the Tarahumara Indians (in Mexico), who mainly eat corn and beans, and he noted that their cholesterol levels were very low, and that they suffered from practically no cardiovascular disease.

Cabbage

This vegetable, which is very popular in Eastern European diets, brings together lots of different positive aspects. To start with, one cup of grated cabbage contains just 33 calories. What's interesting is that even when it's cooked, cabbage retains its nutritional benefits (no matter how long you cook it for). So, whether you eat it raw and grated, or cooked (in sauerkraut for example), eating it once a week is enough to help you prevent colon cancer and increase your life expectancy.

Studies carried out in Greece, Japan and in the US have provided evidence that people who eat a lot of cabbage generally experience a lower rate of colon cancer, and have a lower than average death rate.



Cottage cheese

We can't talk about fat burning foods without mentioning cottage cheese. One cup of light (2%) cottage cheese is extremely low in fat, despite containing 205 calories, and is rich in riboflavin (vitamin B) and calcium.

You can eat it sweet by adding fruit (grapes or another type of fruit), or a fruit-based mix, and you can also flavor it with chives or dill, for example, or by adding scallions or other garden vegetables.

It's also possible to use it when you're preparing meals, sauces or cakes, instead of using crème fraîche.

Wild Caught Fish

For a very long time, experts have known that fish has lots of health benefits.

You can find several articles in the "New England Journal of Medicine" from 1985 which give evidence that regularly consuming fish had a direct impact on a decrease in the number of cardiovascular diseases in the population.

It's the oils in fish which affect our bodies by thinning our blood and reducing blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and as Dr Joël Kremer (Albany Medical College, New York) discovered, fish can provide great relief for inflammation and the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis (stiffness in the joints).

The number of calories in fish and seafood varies, depending on the variety, from 80 calories per 100 grams (cod) to 230 calories per 100 grams (herring).

Fish is also an excellent ingredient for helping to prevent weight gain.

Greek Yogurt

As with all dairy products, yogurt provides a huge amount of protein, riboflavin, calcium and zinc. In addition to this, it doesn't contain any fat, and provides just 120 calories on average.

Yogurt can be used in a number of ways, which makes it a very attractive everyday ingredient: for breakfast (with fruit or cereal), in meal preparation instead of using crème fraîche (soup, sauces, sides, etc.).

As a general rule, replacing whole milk and cream with yogurt is a good idea.

You can also let your imagination take over and create sides or sauces made from yogurt by adding a few ingredients (lemon juice, garlic, pepper, Worcestershire sauce, etc.) which will make a great accompaniment for baked potatoes, for example.

However, make sure you choose fat free yogurts, and avoid any which have already been sweetened, or which contain fruit. You can sweeten to taste afterwards, or flavor with fruit or a homemade fruit-based mix.



Leafy greens/root vegetables

This category includes endives, beetroots, turnips, green cabbage, kale, Swiss chard, spinach and mustard. All of these vegetables are extremely low in calories, since one cup of leafy greens never exceeds 50 calories!

Obviously, they don't contain any fat, and they're high in fiber and vitamins A and C. They're perfect for stews, soups, and salads etc., or any other classic spinach-based dish.

Kiwi

This is a fruit which originates from New Zealand, which is low in calories (46 per kiwi), and is a real sweet treat.

It's recognized by lots of health agencies for its high potassium and vitamin C content.

Even though not many people eat it like this, it is possible to eat the skin too. Kiwis can easily be kept for a month in the salad draw of your refrigerator.

Figs

A study from the United States Department of Agriculture has shown that eating figs increases the feeling of fullness, and reduces any desire to eat too much.

The participants in the study even said that they felt like they had eaten too much as the amount of figs in their diet increased (for an identical number of calories).

They're very high in fiber, and one raw fig contains 37 calories, with a dried fig weighing in at 48 calories.

There are lots of different ways of consuming figs: with cheese or other fruits, in fruit juice, or as a purée for making pastries or cookies. When combined with fromage frais (or any soft cheeses), they can be a delicious little pre-dinner snack.

Leeks

Leeks are part of the same family as onions and shallots, and share many of the same benefits as well as being just as delicious. Like onions, they contain a very low number of calories; in a cup of leeks, there are just 32.

Leek soup is a delicious way of eating them, but there are also other ways of preparing them. You could marinate them (in a vinaigrette, for example), boil or poach them, or even season them with herbs, mustard, or sheep's cheese, for example.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are incredible ingredients: they're very low in fat, sodium and calories (25 on average), but high in fiber and potassium.

Harvard Medical School has carried out one study which discovered that people who ate tomatoes (or strawberries) every week had a lower risk of dying from cancer than people on other diets.

Naturally, tomatoes are perfect for making sauces which preserve their health benefits, but there are plenty of other ways of eating them: in soups or stews, raw, etc.

It's useful to know that canned tomatoes (peeled, whole, chopped or crushed) preserve their qualities. so even a simple tomato-based sauce with pasta will help you make the fat melt away.

Lettuce

We often wrongly consider lettuce to have little or no nutritional value, but for the 10 calories which a cup of lettuce contains, its vitamin C content shouldn't be overlooked. In addition to this, it will fill you up without adding calories to your meal.

Feel free to mix it up in order to vary your salads, and try all of the varieties you can find: romaine, Batavia, oakleaf, gem, arugula, iceberg, cress, radicchio, dandelion, and even parsley.

Pasta

Contrary to common belief, pasta on its own doesn't make you fat; it's the sauces and other accompaniments which should be called into question. In fact, a cup of pasta contains just 155 calories.

However, a study carried out by the American Institute of Baking has shown pasta to be high in minerals such as iron, manganese, phosphorous, zinc, copper and magnesium, and they also have the perfect amount of starch for a staple food.



As with bread or grains, it's better for your health to choose wholegrain pasta.

Melons

Melons have the enormous benefit of combining their delicious flavor with a very low calorie content: one cup of melon balls provides between just 40 and 60 calories, depending on the variety (44 for Casaba melons, 49 for watermelons, 60 for honeydew melons and cantaloupes).

Another advantage of melons is that they are one of the fruits with the highest levels of fiber, and they're rich in vitamins A and C, as are lots of other fruits.

If you add in the fact that a cup of cantaloupe has an impressive amount of potassium (547mg), you'll get a delicious food which will help you melt the fat away.

Onions

Onions have lots of benefits which make them a great staple for a healthy diet: they're delicious, cheap, very flavorsome, and contain very few calories (just 42 on average for a raw onion, and around 60 for a cup of chopped onions).

In addition to their delicious taste, they will provide you with plenty of benefits such as better blood consistency, and better cholesterol regulation. They may even have an impact in fighting allergies.

You can roast onions with wine vinegar (or sherry), and serve them as a side dish (as a purée, for example). You can also brown them with some basil in white wine, and add them to a pizza, or even boil, peel and roast them in the oven, then coat with olive oil and lemon juice.

Sweet potatoes

Their low calorie content (103 for an average sweet potato) combined with the fact they'll leave you feeling full, makes them a practically inescapable food in an effective diet. They will also provide you with a sizeable amount of vitamin A (one of the highest levels around).



They're easy to prepare: as a soup, added to stews, or even baked in the oven (whether this is a traditional oven, or a microwave oven). To season them, use a bit of vegetable stock or lemon juice instead of butter.

Turkey

Turkey is an excellent substitute for red meat, because it contains just 177 calories per 100 gram, whereas beef contains 211. In fact, turkey can be an even better alternative for beef in all of the dishes you would usually use beef for (spaghetti sauce, burgers, meatloaf, etc.). However, the absence of natural fat in turkey means that you will have to add another ingredient, to bind together the mix.

Unlike beef, which is naturally fatty and contains 23 grams of fat for 100g of meat, turkey contains just 9 (the equivalent of 2.5 teaspoons of butter or margarine).

This kind of poultry, which was discovered by Spanish settlers, is a delicious ingredient, which is perfect for weight loss.

However, be careful if you're buying turkey mince, because this may contain the skin, so will have a higher fat content than skinless minced turkey breasts. You can also buy turkey thighs, drumsticks or fillets separately.

From a dietary point of view, oats are a very interesting grain, as studies led by Dr James Anderson at the University of Kentucky have shown. He showed that people who consumed around 100 grams of oat bran per day were able to lose 1kg / 2lbs in 2 months.

A cup of bran or flakes contains just 110 calories, but obviously just consuming oats won't do wonders in itself. Only a balanced diet will help you to improve your health, and lose weight.