

The 4 Biggest “Low Carb” Mistakes (And How to Avoid Them)



First of All... You're Not to Blame!

Most people make big blunders that hinder their success when they start eating “low carb” to lose weight.

I mean, eating low-carb sounds easy, right?

Just skip all the foods everyone knows are loaded with sugar or are “starchy,” like bread, rice, pasta and oatmeal.

Not so fast!

A little fine-tuning on that plan will give you much better results.

The following 4 mistakes hold back many people who could have had *great results* if they'd only made a few tweaks.

Before you start eating low carb, commit these common mistakes to memory and resolve to never make them yourself!

Here we go...

Mistake #1: Not Enough Protein



Protein is one of the most important nutrients you must give your body, but most women don't take in enough of it, whether when trying to lose weight or maintain their ideal body composition.

The right amount provides multiple benefits.

First, a higher protein intake will lead you toward eating less during the day, because you're just not as hungry as you used to be. Of all

the macronutrients – carbohydrate, protein and fat – protein stimulates the greatest satiety.

The amino acids have an effect on certain hormones that influence appetite, and some research concludes that the success of low carb diet high in protein can be attributed to the relatively high protein content and not the lower carb intake.

Adequate protein also stimulates the growth of lean body tissues, like muscle! As women age, it's particularly important to fight the natural tendency to lose muscle mass and have it replaced by fat.

Even if you aren't technically overweight, failing to work your muscles will allow them to shrink, or atrophy, and you can be what's known as "skinny fat."

This means your body looks fairly lean, but if you scanned your muscles in an MRI you would see it filled with fat pockets, like a well-marbled steak. That fatty muscle is flabby and doesn't help you burn calories the way lean muscle does.

Lean muscle requires a lot of energy, so simply having more muscle will cause you to burn more calories even while at rest. Plus, the heat it gives off will keep you warmer and maybe even make it unnecessary to reach for that extra blanket!

For the easiest fat loss, you will want to eat about 0.8-1.0 grams of protein for every pound of your *ideal* body weight, not your current weight.

For example, if your goal weight is 130 pounds, then you would need to eat between 104 and 130 grams of protein per day.

That might seem like a lot to manage but consuming at least 30 grams of protein at every meal will get you there.

Once you reach your ideal weight you can back down your intake a little bit. But while you're in the weight loss phase, keep it high to fight the tendency of a caloric deficit to cause loss of lean body mass.

It's called the "protein sparing effect" and it helps you look the way you want to when that extra weight comes off.

Mistake #2: Eating Too Much Fat



Unfortunately, the recent low-carb and keto craze added confusion to the puzzle of how to lose weight by enthusiastically encouraging people to “eat fat to lose fat.”

While this is true to some extent, the fat required is not nearly what most people think.

Contrary to what you might hear low-carb and keto advocates promoting, you don't want to add butter to your coffee, gorge yourself on bacon or drench your salads in olive oil.

Only people who keep their carbs extremely low and protein moderate need to find a way to eat more calories. Those folks are burning more calories than they can take in with moderate fat, so they need to bump it up.

But my guess is you are not that person, at least not yet! Most women in midlife or later do NOT need all those calories. Real food in its natural form can provide most of your fat.

My motto in guiding your low-carb nutrition priorities is, "Protein and produce, with fat to fill."

Mistake #3: Calculating carbs wrong



Let's look at some numbers.

You're used to the Nutrition Facts label on packaging or in online nutritional listings calling out the Total Carbohydrate. Under that line you'll see the sub-components of Dietary Fiber and Total Sugars.

If you were to use the Total Carbohydrate line in your nutrition calculations, you would unnecessarily restrict yourself to far fewer carbs than you had planned.

It could feel like your options are much more restricted than they actually are.

For example, let's look at broccoli. A cup of raw broccoli has 6 grams of total carbs, but it also has 2.4 grams of fiber. That's 40 percent of the carb content as fiber, and most of that fiber will pass right through you, undigested.

This means you can fill up on fiber and it doesn't count against your carb intake!

To give yourself a chance to eat more fiber, preferably in the form of a wide array of vegetables, use *net carbs* as your measurement.

Net carbs is equal to total carbs minus fiber.

For this cup of broccoli, that would mean $(6 - 2.4)$ grams = 3.6 grams of net carbs.

This is why you can fill up on high fiber vegetables, because they will all have lower net carbs while still giving you bulk in your diet to feel full and keep your digestion smooth.

Mistake #4: Snacking



We've made a lot of progress in dietary recommendations, but the "frequent, small meals" advice that has been prevalent throughout the nutrition world for decades is old thinking.

It's now being replaced with advice to allow plenty of time between meals and a big gap overnight.

This timing advice is based on more recent scientific evidence that finds allowing your body to get out of the 'digest and grow' phase,

move into the 'repair and take out the garbage' phase, and access stored body fat for energy helps you get and stay leaner and healthier.

Think about it: When you have an injury, like a broken leg, or an illness, like the flu, your body tells you it's tired. It needs a lot of down time to repair what's damaged and fight off invaders.

This same thing happens on a less-obvious scale all the time. Our old cells are constantly being replaced with new cells.

Some turnover is very fast, such as in the digestive tract, and some is slower, such as in bone.

A tremendously exciting new finding in human-body housecleaning is the glymphatic system of the brain.

While you are sleeping, your brain cells actually shrink to allow cleansing glymphatic fluid to wash between them and carry away cellular debris, including fragments that contribute to the dreaded amyloid plaque.

And during this repair time, because no nutrition is coming in, if you run out of calories that are stored as easily accessible glycogen, your body must go scavenging for more energy.

This is when it finds and breaks down stored body fat, which is exactly what you want!

By not overeating carbs and then creating a big gap between meals, such as a 12-16 hour overnight fast, your body will search out energy in those fat cells you thought would never shrink.

People who have hit a plateau with weight loss often start losing fat again when they create a long window of no calories coming in. That includes no fatty coffee!

The idea is to create the drive in your body to find STORED fat for energy, not use the fat you are drinking in that creamy coffee for energy.

You must make your body search INSIDE itself for food.

If you keep your carbs low and stick to a schedule of a daily fasting window, you will not only have healthier cells, you will get rid of stubborn fat stores with ease.

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