

THE LEAN AB BEAST SYSTEM

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Lean Ab Beast System

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Intro

Chapter 1 - The Ultimate Six Pack Law

Chapter 2 - The SPF Dieting Formula (choose your own adventure)

Chapter 3 - Inflammation, insulin sensitivity and acidity

Chapter 4 - Food Choices

Chapter 5 - Putting it all together

Intro

Let me tattoo one thing to the inside of your skull:

Six-Pack Nutrition Is A Different Beast Than Fitness Nutrition

Yes, you can live the fit life and have room for serious indulgence.

And many guru's will show you that you can get shredded eating anything and everything.

However, when my private 10k/month clients ask me to design a program for them to get shredded for movie roles, the beach or just to look better - one thing is a priority.

Speed.

If you want a shredded six pack fast, here's the diet approach you need.

The Six Pack Law

You've heard this before however I'm going to reiterate it again.

Do not break this rule. If you do, all of your efforts will fail.

Fat loss = energy in < energy out for an extended period of time

Trying to achieve your fitness goal without understanding calories and willing to do simple math is the path to failure. It's like driving across the united states without paying attention to your gas levels.

You could probably do it, but more likely than not, you won't.

So whether its counting, meal planning or something else to effectively build muscle, sans fat, you need to regulate your food intake.

So what is a calorie?

In 1863, a calorie was defined as the amount of heat needed to raise the temperature of 1 kilogram of water from 0 to 1 degree Celsius. For us normal folk, a calorie is simply a way to measure energy.

Different types of macronutrients have standard amounts of calories. One gram of protein has 4 calories, one gram of carbohydrates has 4 calories one gram of fat has 9 calories and one gram of alcohol has 7 calories - but we will cover macronutrient breakdown in the next chapter.

The law of thermodynamics

Our bodies follow certain laws. One of these laws is the laws of energy balance. If you consume more energy (calories) than you burn, you will slowly gain weight. The opposite is also true.

Contrary to popular belief, it's irrelevant how much protein/carbs/fat you eat. It's also irrelevant the "types" of food that you eat.

As long as it's less than your daily calorie expenditure you will not gain weight.

Unfortunately many small grab and go meals as well as grandma's leftovers have many more calories than expected.

And while convenient it comes with a price: little muscle gain with rapid fat gain, surpassed testosterone and hindered muscle building potential.

How Many Calories Should I Eat?

Many factors play a role in the total amount of energy your body burns on a daily basis - this is known as your maintenance calories.

The factors include first and foremost body size, body fat / lean body mass levels and level of basic physical activity (i.e. are you in construction or do you have a desk job.)

Calculate your caloric maintenance

Plug in your numbers in the calculator.

All about Macro's

Now as we briefly discussed before, calories are made up of macronutrients or macro's for short. There are 3 main macro's and one, I guess bonus, macronutrient. Different macronutrients provide different calories and support different processes in the human body.

Protein

Protein contains 4 calories for every one gram and is both the most important and least important macronutrient that needs to be considered. It's the most important because it is a vitally important component of cell growth.

Speaking generally, protein is most useful as a building block for the body's various cells and tissues.

It is also the least important because the body does not need a great deal of protein on a day to day basis.

Most research indicates that the maximum amount of protein needed to support muscle growth is 1.8 grams per kg (or 0.8 grams per pound) of bodyweight, however I feel consuming just a tad more protein than this is beneficial.

Since we need to be careful not to excessively overeat and cause fat gain it makes sense to eat enough protein to stay full and satisfied but no more.

Carbohydrates

One gram of carbs has 4 calories. In study after study, higher carbohydrate diets outperform low carbohydrate diets in maintaining and increasing testosterone levels.

When athletes are put on high and low carbohydrate diets, those on the higher carbohydrate diets have consistently lower levels of cortisol (stress) over time - which is nice side benefit.

Consuming above average amounts of carbohydrates is ideal scenario for building and preserving muscle. A high intake of carbohydrates will ensure that you maintain full glycogen stores in your muscles. Your body is more efficient at building muscle and being in an anabolic state when your glycogen stores are full or near full.

In addition, carbs are the most efficient energy source and sufficient carbs will ensure optimal training performance. The better and more intense your workouts are the more muscle growth you will promote.

Fat

One gram of fat has 9 calories. Low fat diets have been shown to inhibit testosterone production. When looking at fats you need to consider the three main types of fats that people consume, monounsaturated, polyunsaturated and saturated fats.

In terms of enhancing testosterone production you want to keep the ratio of monounsaturated and saturated to polyunsaturated fatty acids as high as possible.

This is because polyunsaturated fatty acids do not increase testosterone as much as the other two types of fats. Many studies have even shown that they have an inhibitory effect on testosterone.

I will get into specific recommendations for fat containing foods, but for starters eggs, avocados, steak, coconut oil and olive oil are some good basic sources of monounsaturated and saturated fat.

Alcohol

One gram of alcohol has 7 calories. We will go into more detail in the alcohol chapter.

My favorite Fat Loss Macro Split's

Now that we know calories are made up of different macronutrients we must create a split since eating only one macronutrient doesn't allow our body to survive. Each percentage refers to the amount based on your total calories for the day. So for the first

split 40% fat of 2000 calories = 800 calories of fat. In grams, since there's 9 calories of fat in one gram, you divide 800 by 9 = 89g of fat. Repeat for the two other macronutrients.

Here are 3 macro splits I recommend:

Max Testosterone split : 40% Fat / 40% Carbs / 20% Protein

A balanced split: 35% Fat / 35% Carbs /30% Protein

Rapid Fat Loss split: 30% Fat / 30% Carbs / 40% Protein

You can also create your own split.

It really doesn't matter what your macros are as long as you hit your calories and get bare-minimum protein (80-120g/day). You might need to mix and match, but eventually you will find the one you like / your body responds best too.

Meal frequency

Assuming you are hitting the appropriate amount of calories and macronutrients, then meal frequency isn't awfully important.

I'm going to make this very simple. So simple, in fact, that many guys will likely feel genuine "fear". Everyone is so used to complicated "guru" nonsense when it comes to dietary recommendations that we've begun finding comfort in the complications and exceptions.

We're so used to complicated nonsense that we fear something simple. "There's no way something simple could work for me," we think. "I'm special."

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

If you're tired of yo-yo'ing, sub-par results in the gym, and a soft physique, then I implore you to please give this simple plan a shot.

You will find it liberating. Freedom is important.

In fact, whether you eat two meals or six meals won't make an ounce of a difference to your success from a scientific standpoint.

For that reason I recommend sticking to the meal pattern that you enjoy the most.

For most people, having to eat 5+ meals per day is a pain in the ass. Most people I find do best on 2-4 meals per day. The biggest meals should come in the evening and/or after training.

But again, as long as you are hitting your calories on a daily basis, IT DOES NOT MATTER.

Fasting

Ever heard you grow in your sleep?

If you haven't it's time we introduce you to the magical hormone known as growth hormone.

Growth hormone's effects on testosterone are so profound that both testosterone's androgenic and anabolic properties are inhibited when growth hormone levels are below normal.

Short daily fasts (14-16 hours) are a nearly guaranteed way to experience elevated growth hormones levels (up to 2000% More) without the more drastic spikes in cortisol that are seen in prolonged fasting or starvation diets.

While you may be scratching your head as "not eating" seems like too simple a strategy to work, keep in mind that it is one component of a lifestyle you are building to take advantage of every testosterone enhancing habit you can have.

The point is that anything that increases growth hormone is going to have a positive impact on testosterone and its enhancement of primary and secondary sex characteristics.

When you do eat, after an extended fast, the anabolic effects of that meal will be much greater. This is due to improvements in your muscles insulin sensitivity. This leads to greater nutrition partitioning into your muscles stores.

I have found that by skipping breakfast I have had a much easier time building muscle while maintaining leanness.

That said it is essential that you provide your body with the right amount of nutrition during the feasting window. If you are incapable getting in the appropriate amount of calories in 2- 3 large meals then fasting is probably not for you.

If you wish to perform the strength training before your first meal then I strongly recommend taking the FORGE supplement in the supplement manual as it will protect muscle mass and minimize fat gain.

The Lean Ab Beast Difference

Subject

You want to get leaner... no, you want to get shredded.

You know that you will have to cut calories and likely carbs too. You are aware that you will likely have to step your training up an notch and probably need to throw cardio into the mix.

You might even want to use supplements to help the process.

But here is a question you might not have considered:

Do I try to lose a lot of fat as fast as possible or do I use a more gradual, longer term approach?

Those who give a more emotional response will want to do the former... after all they want the fat off *yesterday!*

Those who think in a more objective and pragmatic manner will go with the long game approach, to minimize the chances of doing something harmful to their body and avoid losing muscle.

What really is the best option?

Is there even one? Maybe it depends on the person (hint: it generally does).

This is a very important subject, especially if we consider the low rate of success of most fat loss phases: **either people fail to achieve their goals or they rebound quickly once they reach them.**

THE THREE PATHS OF FAT LOSS

In the introduction, I mentioned two different approaches to getting shredded: the blitz approach and the long game. But there is a third one that is a blend of both. To use training terminology, fat loss can either be a **sprint, intervals** or a **marathon**.

Fat loss sprint: A short, intense, all-out fat loss effort. You pull out all the stops and go balls to the walls for a short period of time (normally 4-6 weeks). Right from the start, you go with a large caloric deficit, cut your energetic nutrients (carbs and fats) by a lot, increase your training volume and intensity, throw cardio in, do two-a-days if you can, and use fat loss supplements if you desire. The goal is to shed as much body fat as possible before you cause any potential damage or lose motivation.

Fat loss marathon: This is the typical “bodybuilding” approach. You take a longer period to diet the fat off, normally 16-20 weeks (some leaner individuals will diet down for 10-12 weeks only). The fat loss effort starts more conservative: doing the minimum to still get a significant rate of fat loss. As the phase progresses, you will turn the intensity up a notch: cutting more calories, doing more cardio, adding a fat burner, etc.

Fat loss intervals: This is a combination of fat loss sprints and a longer overall duration. Basically, doing short (2-4 weeks) blitzes where the fat loss efforts are very intense and taking fat loss breaks of 1-2 weeks in between these blitzes. This is repeated until the desired leanness is achieved.

Each approach has its pros and cons.

They can all work, but they can also all lead to problems.

For our purposes the best approach is the fat loss intervals.

Basically, you go back and forth between short periods of intense dieting/activity levels and of eating at maintenance level with less activity.

The whole process can last 16-20 weeks like a marathon, but it will be in a format that looks like this:

3 weeks intense dieting (30% caloric deficit)

1 week maintenance

Of course, the duration of each phase can vary based on the goal and how the person’s physique is changing.

But I'd keep the intense dieting phase between 2 and 4 weeks and the maintenance phases at 1-2 weeks.

Notice that I mentioned "maintenance", not "surplus".

This is still a fat loss plan. If you go on a deficit for 3 weeks than on a surplus for 1 week you can easily slow down the fat loss process.

Whereas eating a maintenance will allow you to avoid metabolic damage, help maintain training intensity, provide a mental break and avoid muscle loss (might even allow you to gain some muscle).

A lot of people will screw up this approach by pigging out on their 1 week away from severe dieting.

This is a big mistake and will hurt your progression.

Simply eating at maintenance by increasing carbs intake (I prefer to increase carbs over fat since carbs have a greater impact on preventing leptin from crashing down and maintaining the T4 to T3 conversion).

This approach bypasses the shortcomings of the blitz approach.

But you need to understand that while you are fairly "extreme" during the periods of intense dieting, you are not as extreme as during a blitz approach.

I would also go with a gradual approach, meaning that each block of intense dieting gets a bit more demanding.

Inflammation, Insulin sensitivity and Acidity

When growing crops, you can have the best fertilizers and ideal weather conditions but if the soil is rotten you will get very little production. The same is true with your body:

You can provide it with as much protein as necessary, use the best supplements, and train hard but if your body is “rotten” you will not progress optimally. It will be difficult both to build muscle and lose fat.

“Rotten” means “not optimally healthy”, and here I’m referring to three situations in particular:

- a high acid load
- poor insulin sensitivity
- low grade systemic inflammation

Any of these three conditions can be damaging for your health and will have a profoundly negative impact on your gains.

This is not something I used to worry about. For years I refused to answer any questions about my diet because quite frankly it was bad! I ate no veggies, very little fruit, a lot of red meat and no fish, and my sources of carbs were often bread, breakfast cereal and even candy! I managed to stay lean because I basically forced myself to go for long periods on low calories in between periods of binging. Because I stayed lean and was decently muscular, I figured that it was fine. I could have been the poster child for IIFYM!

But then some serious health issues appeared, among them kidney damage due to uncontrolled blood pressure, poor sugar management and a very high acid load. For 3 years I was unable to gain muscle, and when I tried to get leaner I only got flatter. I tried **everything** to gain muscle and **nothing** worked.

When I changed my diet to an anti-inflammatory/low acid load diet (it was my Hail Mary) I instantly began to progress again! I was able to get leaner and build muscle and on top of that felt a ton better physically and mentally.

Let me explain what I mean...

A high acid load

Before we get started, let's discuss **pH**.

pH is a measure of how acid (or alkaline) something is (in our case, the body). A pH value of 7 is considered to be neutral. Anything below 7 is considered acidic and the lower the value, the higher the acidity level. Alkalines have a value above 7 and the higher the value, the higher the alkalinity.

pH lower than 7 = acid

pH higher than 7 = alkaline

Now, in order for your body to function properly, its level of acidity must be within a certain range. Although the ideal level is a pH of 7.4 (so slightly alkaline), it functions optimally between 7.0 and 7.5.

Anywhere lower than 7.0, things start to function less optimally. Naturally, the body will strive to maintain its level of acidity within the appropriate range. If your pH drops, it will release stored substances in an effort to rebalance the pH.

This sounds great...right? I mean, we don't even have to worry about the body becoming acidic if it can balance itself... right?

Not so fast! The substances your body releases to rebalance the body have to come from somewhere:

When the body becomes acidic it will first "mobilize" stored calcium and phosphorus in an effort to alkalinize. Where does the calcium and phosphorus come from? Your bones!

So your body's effort to rebalance pH can actually weaken your bones.

Another substance that can be used to alkalinize the body is sodium bicarbonate, which is released by the pancreas.

When you are in a constant state of acidosis though, the pancreas becomes overloaded and this can have harmful effects that reduce its capacity to produce insulin and may even lead to diabetes.

Glutamine, an amino acid that is most abundant in muscle tissue, is another buffering agent.

When you become acidic, your body will breakdown muscle tissue (meaning that you lose muscle) to make glutamine available.

The kidneys, which much like the pancreas are responsible for sending bicarbonate to the blood, are working overtime every time your body needs to be de-acidified, while the liver is responsible for excreting acids.

If you are in a constant state of acidosis long term, these three organs will suffer damage. But even in the short term, acidosis can really kill your progress.

For those of you who only skimmed through this more physiological portion of text here are the important things to remember:

When the body is in a long term state of constant acidosis, these things happen:

1. Weakening of the bones (loss of calcium and phosphorus)
2. Loss of muscle or significant difficulty building muscle and recovering from training (due to muscle breakdown for glutamine release)
3. Negative impact on hormonal profile (GH resistance, decrease in IGF-1, problems with the insulin system, increase in cortisol)

Simply put, if your body is constantly trying to re-balance itself because your nutrition is too acid-forming, it is absolutely impossible to progress rapidly when it comes to body composition.

Low grade systemic inflammation

Low-grade systemic inflammation affects the whole body (not only tendons and muscles but organs, blood vessels, etc.), overloads and eventually weakens the immune system, speeds up aging and plays a role in the development of several conditions such as insulin resistance (even diabetes).

As far as aesthetics are concerned LGSI makes you retain water both subcutaneously (beneath the skin) and within fat cells, both of which make you look fatter than you really are.

Since the muscle-building process is so highly dependent on the immune system, LGSI reduces your capacity to gain muscle via the aforementioned overloading and weakening effect.

Poor Insulin Sensitivity

Simply put, if you have poor insulin sensitivity you must produce a lot more of it when you eat a meal.

This increases the workload on the pancreas and can further desensitize insulin receptors even (making you even less sensitive), which can both lead to diabetes.

From a body composition point of view, having to produce more insulin to do the job (because you are desensitized) makes losing fat significantly harder.

As long as insulin is high, your body is in storage mode and energy mobilization is less efficient. This means that the longer insulin stays elevated, the harder it is to lose fat.

Poor insulin sensitivity, especially in the muscles, can also make it much harder to gain muscle mass.

Insulin resistant muscle cells cannot absorb amino acids and glucose as efficiently, and these are important building blocks for muscle gain.

What's more, it will be more difficult to replenish glycogen stores.

Ideally, you want to be as insulin sensitive as possible, and this is especially important for the muscle cells.

Lean Beast Food Choices

While you can get lean eating like crap, I advise against it. You'll end up achieving your goal at the expense of your hormones and happiness. Plus, you are 100x more likely to regain all the weight after.

Instead I advise a diet that abides by all the SPF laws:

1. Calorie deficit
2. Balanced Macro split
3. Lowers acidity and inflammation
4. Improves insulin sensitivity

Those laws are good and will get you 90% of the way there. But I'm not in the game to give you 90% good information. I'm in it to teach you 100% of the material you need to be a badass.

Thus there are three more topics we need to touch on: Palatability, food variety and the Satiety index.

Food Palatability

A food that is palatable is one that tastes good. Your brain ranks all food in sort of a scale. Palatable food gets a high score because it tends to be calorically dense - which was an important factor in our ancestral hunter-gatherers survival.

Thus our brain craves these foods - not because they are necessarily good for our abs (your brain couldn't care less about how many abs you have showing) - but because they are good for reproductive success (our ultimate goal). In the past this would've been honey, fruit and fatty meat.

Today food engineers have created frankenstein like foods to trick our brains into eating more of them by preying on our very own food scoring system. They are specifically designed to be motivating, palatable and reinforcing.

So which are these seductive foods? Unfortunately they are most likely your favorite...

Pizza, ice cream, potato chips, french fries, bacon, chocolate etc.

When we consume these foods, our brain actually shuts down the fullness hormone so that we can eat more - because it believes these foods to be like winning the lottery of energy.

Thus my issue with many diets, especially IIFYM. Including brain-rewarding food is prone to causing diet derailment, failed goals and a lifetime of fatness and obesity.

For real world proof, let's take a look at these 2 studies.

In 2010, Chris Voigt decided to eat nothing but potatoes with small amounts of oil for 60 days (potatoes are one of the only foods that can sustain a human eaten alone for a long time). He was protesting a federal law to remove potatoes from the paid for vegetables list in the food assistance program.

While his goal was not to lose weight, he ended up losing 21lbs in 60 days eating this extremely bland diet. ALL his blood markers improved substantially and he felt amazing. If he continued, my hypothesis is that he could've gotten ripped.

In 1965 there was an amazing study done to answer the simple question: What happens to the body when food rewards are restricted?

In the study, volunteers were allowed to eat an unlimited amount of a specific liquid concoction. It contained adequate amounts of vitamins, minerals and calories but was extremely bland. The researchers fed both 2 lean people and 2 obese people the concoction.

Without assistance, the lean volunteers ate the exact amount needed every day to maintain their weight.

The obese duo had a different story. Over the course of the diet they consumed - by choice - less than 10% of their daily normal caloric intake (less than 300 calories a day).

After 70 days on the machine one volunteer lost 70lbs and never once complained about hunger. He was then sent home to continue the study, instructed only to drink the amount given to him (400 cals worth) every day.

He stayed on the diet for nearly 255 days losing about 200lbs. Yes, he ate 400 calories a day and never complained about hunger once.

Therefore my prescription for SPF dieters is this: eat simple food for the entirety of your diet. It will crush hunger and make fat loss effortless.

Food Variety

Eating a variety of foods to be healthy is one of the biggest lies in the fitness industry. Sure a diet high in variety can help meet nutritional needs, but it comes with a price:

The more variety we have, the more we eat.

There is a concept in nutritional neuroscience called sensory specific satiety. Sensory specific satiety is the feeling of fullness (satiety) in relation to our food sensors (salty, sweet, fatty etc.) in our brain.

Think of each sense having a meter. Eat a lot of fatty food and that meter fills indicating fullness. However add some dessert (which fills a different meter) and you're hungry all over again. It's why there is always room for dessert.

SPF prescription: Stick to 20 foods and eat them over and over again.

Satiety Index

One of the biggest pitfalls of six pack dieters is hunger. It is usually the culprit behind most failed attempts.

My solution?

Eat foods high on the satiety index.

Susanna Holt, PhD, has developed the Satiety Index, a system to measure different foods' ability to satisfy hunger. A fixed amount (240 calories) of different foods was fed to participants who then ranked their feelings of hunger every fifteen minutes and were allowed to eat freely for the next two hours.

Using white bread as the baseline of 100, 38 different foods were ranked. In other words, foods scoring higher than 100 are more satisfying than white bread and those under 100 are less satisfying.

The chemical components of a food is one of the factors that determines how it ranks on the index. "Beans and lentils, for example, contain anti-nutrients which delay their absorption so they make you feel full for longer," says Holt.

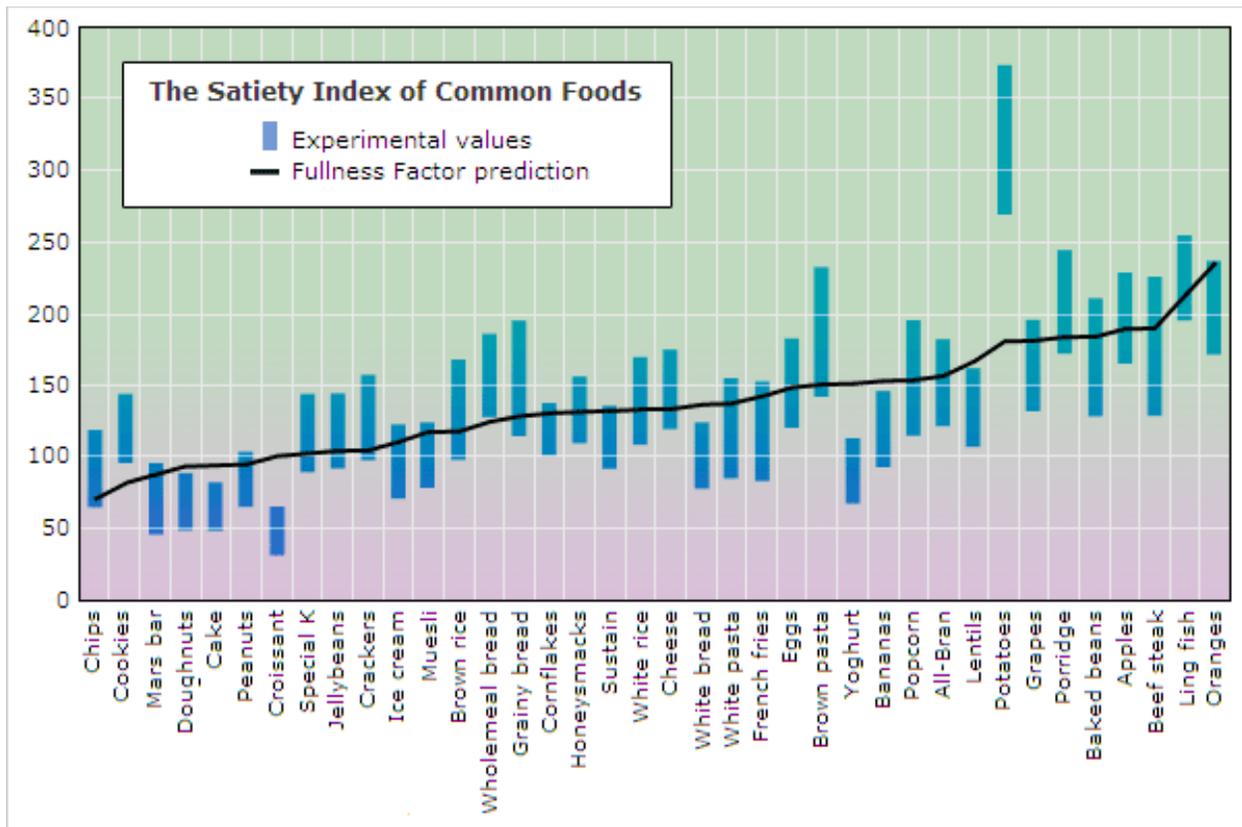
"Roughly speaking, the more fiber, protein and water a food contains, the longer it will satisfy. But you have to look at each foodstuff individually—and that is why we think our index will be so useful."

Another thing that makes a food satisfying is its sheer bulk. "You can eat an awful lot of popcorn without taking in a lot of calories," says Holt.

"It may not weigh much, but it makes your stomach feel full just because it takes up so much space.

Oranges come out very high on the index for the same reason—but orange juice probably wouldn't, even though it has the same number of calories."

SPF prescription: Eat foods that are high on the satiety index chart.



A Rough list:

Potatoes, porridge, oranges, white fish, brown pasta, eggs (whole), granny bread, apples, berries, veggies, Lean white meat, lean red meat, popcorn, grapes and bananas.

The Lean Beast System

With all that science out of the way here's how to set up your lean beast protocol.

Step 1: Set your calories and Macro's

Use the calculator provided.

Step 2: Pick your SPF method (marathon, sprints or intervals)

I recommend intervals, but you may choose the other options.

Step 3: Make your meal plans with SPF approved foods

We've created done for you meals plans already, but you may want to

Step 4: Execute every day

This is the biggest sticking point for most people. On average, people will execute Monday to Friday.

Friday night rolls around and they cheat a little. Then Saturday comes, and they cheat a lot.

And of course then on Sunday, they cheat even more because they want a clean start on Monday.

The cycle then repeats itself.

All those extra calories on the weekend destroy the weekly progress setting yourself up for a lifetime of failure.

Instead, execute everyday.

Do what you need to do, when you need to do it, whether you want to or not. No debate. This is the only true path to success.

Go now and execute. Set your meal plans, macros and food choices.

Then tomorrow, crush it.

To fitness, fortune and freedom

- Pete