

# Paramonos News



## 10 Mistakes Fitness Models Make

### DEVELOPING A PHOBIA ABOUT CARBS

Carbohydrates are the fuel you need to kick ass in the gym, no matter how long you're there. But if you're there for a long (>45 min) workout, as many aspiring fitness models are, carbs are even more important, because they're muscle-sparing—meaning your body will use them rather than resort to breaking down amino acids for fuel.

I know it's hip these days to believe that the best way to get super-lean is to cut carbs out almost entirely, but it's not the only way. I got down to 4.8 percent body fat (according to a DEXA) while tapering my carbs only down from 250 to 150 grams per day, up until the week before a show. Most definitions of low-carb set 125 grams per day as the upper limit. You can do it too, but there's a catch: You need to give yourself time.

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### DIETING TOO EXTREMELY

What's an extreme diet? To me, it's anything drastic enough that your training quality suffers as a result. Low-carb can be extreme, as I just discussed, but so can low-fat. So can low-cal. Low-hydration and low-protein may seem like obvious no-no's, but more people than you might think are guilty of cutting both—the latter as part of an overall calorie drop

Once and for all: Training hard allows you to *burn* the fat off your body, not *starve* it off. One type of transformation has a decent chance of lasting; the other bounces back with a vengeance.

## INITIATING A CUT AT TOO LOW OF A CALORIC INTAKE

This is one of the most common problems I see, so I'm going to give it a bit more space. Let's be clear: I have no problem with cranking away in a caloric deficit to meet a deadline. However, a well-designed taper is a whole different animal from the sort of slash-and-burn many lean people think is necessary to get their definition sharp.

A common recommended energy deficit is 500 calories per day. If you're taking in 1,500 calories per day, you would burn 2,000 calories per day. However, at that low of an intake, you're probably missing out on many important macro and micronutrients that can help you to lose fat. If you shoot for a calorie intake of 2,500 calories instead—just an example—and a calorie expenditure of 3,000 calories, you'll get more of the nutrients you need to work harder, balance hormone levels, and burn that stored fat.

Here's your three-point plan:

- Up the intensity level of your workouts.
- Increase your calorie intake accordingly.
- Make your food choices as nutrient-dense as possible.

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## CUTTING CALORIES TOO DRASTICALLY OVERTIME

It sounds so simple. To burn fat, get in a caloric deficit. To burn *more* fat, get in a *bigger* caloric deficit. But it doesn't work like that.

When you cut calories too drastically, it sets off a chain of events which actually slows fat-burning. First, your thyroid reacts by holding on to as much fat as possible. Also, your leptin levels will decrease, further slowing fat-loss. Some people actually *gain* fat on a low-calorie diet because of this cycle. I've never taken a client under the classic benchmark of *calorie needs = 9-11 x body weight*, and if you have a coach taking you lower, fire that coach today

## WORRYING ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Other people aren't the reason you lose. If you don't win, it's because you're not ready to win, whatever the reason. Take your lumps, learn the lessons you still need to learn, and get back to work.

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## BELIEVING YOU CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BODY ALONE

Here's the cold hard truth—and I don't say this to try to sell you something. If you're able to transform your body by yourself, you didn't set your goals high enough. Good physiques are achieved alone, but great physiques require a team effort. You'll be doing the lion's share, of course, but other people have a lot to teach you if you'll

set aside your ego and let them.

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## ARGUING ONLINE WHEN YOU SHOULD BE IN THE GYM

Debating with forum know-it-alls—or anyone for that matter—is a revolving door that inevitably ends up confirming your own bias. Plus, last time I checked, the best way to “win” a debate online is either:

- post more links to (possibly ill-informed) PubMed studies faster than the other guy; or
- make the last post, which also usually happens to be the nastiest.

Notice how neither of those options means winner is actually *correct*. The person who has nothing better to do with his time always wins. Don't be that loser.

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## BRINGING PROTEIN INTAKE DOWN ALONG WITH OTHER MACROS

Research has shown time and time again that when you are cutting calories, you need to *increase* your protein intake to avoid muscle catabolism, especially if you're training at a high frequency and intensity. If you've been taking in 1 gram per pound of bodyweight, you may need to increase that to 1.5 g per pound or even 2 g, reducing your other macros accordingly.

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## FOCUSING ON NUMBERS BUT FORGETTING ABOUT NUTRIENTS

If you're allowed 200 g of carbs per day, getting those grams from high-fructose corn syrup is going to demolish your fat-burning potential—and your health—whereas getting them from sweet potatoes and berries will help both.

No, I can't say *all* the reasons why, but how about fiber and micronutrients to start? You need them, whole foods have them, and industrial sweetener-sludge doesn't. Calories matter, and must be reduced gradually to sustain fat loss, but don't get so focused on numbers that you lose sight of the importance of nutrients. Your



you!

multivitamin isn't enough to save

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## AVOIDING RED MEAT

Most fitness models who don't eat meat simply look soft and lack muscle hardness, in my experience. Unprocessed, naturally raised meat is extremely healthy, and there is an abundance of evidence-based reasons to eat it—and be proud of it.

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