

The Paleo 30-Day Reset

When your computer starts running slowly, applications are crashing left and right and you can't even move the cursor anymore, what do you do?

Control-alt-delete. Or if you're a Mac user, you hold down the power button to restart.

Sometimes we need to do the same thing with our bodies. They're under constant assault in the modern world. Refined, processed food, environmental toxins, stress, sleep deprivation and chronic infections can all wreak havoc on our health.

We're simply not adapted to live this way.

Life might look a lot different today, with smartphones, electric cars and space travel, but our genes haven't changed all that much. This means - with a few exceptions that we'll cover later - we're still hard-wired to eat the foods our hunter-gatherer ancestors ate. When we follow that genetic template, as we did for thousands of generations, we're naturally healthy and vital. But when we stray from it, as we have in the recent past, we suffer.

So when things start to go awry, the best thing to do is to get back to basics. To return to that 2.5 million year-old genetic template that humans are meant to follow.

In other words, we need to hit the reset button.

How do you do this? You commit to a 30-day period where you eliminate the modern foods that cause disease as well as the foods people are most often allergic to or intolerant of, and focus on the safe, nourishing foods our ancestors have thrived on for 77,000 generations.

Then, after you've "hit the reset button" and returned to that basic template, you can customize it to find the approach that works best for you over the long term.

But first things first. Let's look at the 30-day Reset in more detail.

How does the 30-Day Reset work?

The Reset phase is designed to reduce inflammation, improve digestion, burn fat, identify food sensitivities, reduce allergic reactions, boost energy, regulate blood sugar and stabilize mood.

It almost seems too good to be true, but it works. No other therapy - natural or otherwise - can come even remotely close to accomplishing all of these goals in such a short period of time.

How long does this phase last? There's no hard and fast answer to that question, but it's absolutely essential that you commit to making these changes for at least 30 days - without cheating.

After completing the Reset you'll have a bit more leeway to go off the rails every now and then. (After all, there's more to life than food!) But the Reset phase is not one of those times. This is where you gather your strength and buckle down. You can do it.

By removing the foods that most commonly cause problems, you allow your body to rest and recover from whatever symptoms those foods have been provoking. Just one cheat could trigger a whole new cascade of reactions. Don't do it. It's not worth it.

Remember, 30 days is just a minimum. Some people may need 45, 60 or even 90 days to get the full benefits of the Reset phase.

What foods can you eat?

There are three categories to make it as easy as possible.

- **Eat liberally:** You can enjoy as much of these foods as you like. No counting calories or calculating ratios of protein, fat or carbohydrate. This isn't a "cleanse" or a fast. If a food is on this list, you're free to eat it.
- **Eat in moderation:** You can eat these foods, but don't go hog wild with them. I've indicated how often or how much of them I think is safe, but in general you want to limit consumption of these foods compared to those in the "eat liberally" category.
- **Avoid completely:** Yep, completely. This is where the rubber hits the road. The success (or failure) of the program hinges on your ability to steer clear of these foods during the 30-day Reset.

Eat liberally:

- **Meat and poultry.** Emphasize beef and lamb, but also pork, chicken, turkey, duck and wild game like venison, ostrich, etc. Organic and free-range is always preferable, but is especially so during this program.
- **Organ meats (especially liver).** Liver is the most nutrient-dense food on the planet. If you don't like the taste of liver, one good trick is to put one chicken liver in each cube of an ice cube tray and freeze them. Then, when you're making any meat dish, dice up one chicken liver and add it to the meat.
- **Bone broth soups.** It's essential to balance your intake of muscle meats and organ meats with homemade bone broths. Bone broths are rich in glycine, and amino acid found in collagen, which is a protein important in

maintaining a healthy gut lining.

- **Fish.** Especially fatty fish like salmon, mackerel and herring. Wild is preferable. You need to eat three 6 oz. servings of fatty fish per week to balance your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio.
- **Eggs.** Preferably free-range and organic.
- **Starchy tubers.** Yams, sweet potatoes, yucca/manioc, taro, lotus root, etc.
- **Non-starchy vegetables.** Cooked and raw.
- **Fermented vegetables and fruits.** Sauerkraut, kim chi, beet kvaas, coconut kefir, etc. These are excellent for gut health.
- **Traditional fats.** Coconut oil, palm oil, lard, duck fat, beef tallow and olive oil.
- Olives, avocados and coconuts (including coconut milk).
- Sea salt and spices. Avoid sugar or artificial flavorings.

Eat in moderation:

- **Processed meat.** Sausage, bacon and jerky. Make sure they are gluten, sugar and soy free and organic/free-range meat is preferable.
- **Whole fruit.** Approximately 1-3 servings per day, depending on your blood sugar balance. Favor low sugar fruits like berries and peaches over tropical fruits, apples & pears.
- **Nuts and seeds.** A maximum of a handful per day, preferably soaked overnight and dehydrated or roasted at low temperature (150 degrees) to improve digestibility. Favor nuts lower in omega-6, like hazelnuts and macadamias, and minimize nuts high in omega-6, like brazil nuts and almonds.
- **Green beans, sugar peas and snap peas.** Though technically legumes, they are usually well tolerated.
- **Coffee and black tea.** Black, or with coconut milk. Only if you don't suffer from fatigue, insomnia or hypoglycemia, and only before 12:00 PM. Limit to one cup (not one triple espresso - one cup).
- **Dark chocolate.** 70% or higher in small amounts (i.e. about the size of a silver dollar per serving) is permitted.
- **Vinegar.** Apple cider vinegar is especially well tolerated.
- **Restaurant food.** The main problem with eating out is that restaurants cook with industrial seed oils, which wreak havoc on the body and cause serious inflammation. You don't need to become a cave dweller, but it's best to limit eating out as much as possible during this initial period.

Avoid completely:

- **Dairy.** Including butter, cheese, yogurt, milk, cream & any dairy product that comes from a cow, goat or sheep.
- **Grains.** Including bread, rice, cereal, oats, or any gluten-free pseudo grains like sorghum, teff, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, etc.
- **Legumes.** Including beans of all kinds (soy, black, kidney, pinto, etc.), peas, lentils and peanuts.
- **Concentrated sweeteners, real or artificial.** Including sugar, high fructose corn syrup, maple syrup, honey,

agave, brown rice syrup, Splenda, Equal, Nutrasweet, xylitol, stevia, etc.

- **Processed or refined foods.** As a general rule, if it comes in a bag or a box, don't eat it. This also includes highly processed "health foods" like protein powder, energy bars, dairy-free creamers, etc.
- **Industrial seed oils.** Soybean, corn, safflower, sunflower, cottonseed, canola, etc. Read labels - seed oils are in almost all processed, packaged and refined foods (which you should be mostly avoiding anyway).
- **Sodas and diet sodas.** All forms.
- **Alcohol.** In any form. (Don't freak out. It's just 30 days.)
- **Processed sauces and seasonings.** Soy sauce, tamari, and other processed seasonings and sauces (which often have sugar, soy, gluten, or all of the above).

Caveats and tweaks

With certain health conditions the basic program above needs further modification:

- Those with arthritis, joint pain, autoimmune disease and severe gut issues should also eliminate nightshades and eggs. Nightshades include potatoes, tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers, eggplant, tomatillos, pepinos, pimentos, paprika and cayenne pepper. Nightshades have compounds called alkaloids that can cause inflammation and worsen joint pain in susceptible people. Eggs contain proteins that are common allergens, particularly in susceptible people.
- Those with insulin resistance, hypoglycemia or reactive hypoglycemia, and those wishing to lose weight, should limit fruit and starchy vegetables. The total amount eaten each day should equal roughly 50 grams per day of carbohydrate, which is the amount contained in 2 servings of low-glycemic fruit (berries) and 1-2 servings of starch (i.e. sweet potato, taro, yucca, etc.).
- Those with fatigue, insomnia, anxiety, mood swings or depression should eliminate coffee, tea and all caffeine entirely. Caffeine stimulates the adrenals and can worsen all of these conditions. Once your adrenal issues have been addressed, you may be able to add them back in moderation.
- Those who are athletes or have high levels of physical activity may want to increase their carbohydrate intake, especially after training. As a general idea, a minimum of 600 calories (150g) per day of carbohydrate, and as much as 800 calories (200g) or more may be required to meet energy needs, depending on the intensity of training and individual tolerance.

Okay, there it is. If you're completely new to this whole Paleo thing you might be feeling pretty overwhelmed right about now. "I thought saturated fats were bad", you say. "Aren't whole grains healthy?"

If you have questions about why the program includes some foods commonly thought to be dangerous and excludes other foods commonly thought to be healthy, you may want to read the book *The Paleo Cure*. In it, you'll learn the "what and why" in great detail, and all of your questions will be answered.

This handout, however, is much more about “how” than what or why. And if you’re like most people, that’s what you’re most concerned about.

So dive in and give this a shot. Then, once you’re feeling better than you have in years, you might be a lot more motivated to find out why. At that point you can go back and read *The Paleo Cure* and other resources to learn the theory behind what we’re doing here.

Frequently asked questions about the 30-Day Reset

How do I do it?

I recognize this will be a dramatic change for many of you. The best way to do it is to just dive right in. Begin right now. If you procrastinate or delay, it just gets harder.

When will I get results?

The first few days can be hard. Your body will be going through withdrawal. Sugar and wheat in particular are addictive and you may notice symptoms like mood swings, strong cravings, irritability and fatigue as your body adjusts to life without them.

But at some point you will recover and start feeling better than you did before you began the program. Your energy will improve, your skin will clear up, your digestion will smooth out, your sleep will get deeper, your moods will stabilize and you’ll start shedding some pounds (only if you need to, usually). Aches, pains and mysterious symptoms you’ve had for ages will - seemingly miraculously - begin to improve.

This program has the potential to change your life. Though it may be difficult, the results are worth the effort.

I thought fat was bad for me. Shouldn’t I limit it?

The biggest mistake people make on this program is not eating enough fat. You’re eliminating a lot of foods from your diet (bread, grains, beans, etc.), and you have to replace those calories with something. Healthy fat is that something. Healthy fat doesn’t make you fat. Food toxins like wheat, fructose and seed oils - along with other aspects of the modern lifestyle - make you fat. Fat is the preferred fuel source of the body, and should constitute about 60-70% of calories.

A little cheat here and there can’t hurt, right?

In general, once you've figured out your ideal diet, this is true. But this isn't the time to cheat. Don't do it. It's not worth it. One piece of bread or one glass of milk could re-start the inflammatory process and throw your body back into the chaos that led you to this in the first place. If you can stick this initial period out, it will get easier. At some point you won't even miss those foods you think you can't live without.

Shouldn't I be counting calories and calculating macronutrient ratios?

Try to relax into this as much as possible. Don't overanalyze what you're eating. Enjoy your food. Make cooking fun and leave time to savor your creations.

This is too hard. How can I make it easier?

No man (or woman) is an island. Making big changes is hard, and the more support you have in doing this, the easier it will go. See if you can enlist your spouse, significant other or a good friend to do this with you. (They may not be eager to join, but they'll thank you later.) Have a "paleo pot luck". Invite friends over to cook with you.

I've got a trip planned or I'm going out on a date. What do I do?

First, check out the On the Go guide for ideas on easy-to-pack Paleo snacks. If you know you're going out to dinner with some friends this weekend, choose a place that can accommodate your needs. Call ahead and ask if they have gluten-free items on the menu. Pick a place that has meat and vegetable dishes, and order a salad on the side. Don't put yourself in a situation where you're starving because you haven't planned in advance, and then eat a bagel with cream cheese because that's all that's available. If you're going on a road trip, stock up on paleo-friendly snacks. This is all possible, but it does require some planning and foresight.

I'm taking a boatload of supplements. Should I continue taking them during the 30-Day Reset?

This one's a little harder to answer. If you know the supplement helps you, or you're taking it for a specific goal or purpose (i.e. iodine for thyroid function), by all means continue. But if it's something you started taking a while ago and you can't even remember why, and it doesn't seem to be helping you, then go ahead and stop taking it. You can always start again later if you need to.