

A pink water bottle with a flip-top lid and two pink dumbbells are positioned on the right side of the page. The water bottle is at the top, and the dumbbells are below it, one slightly behind the other. The background is a solid light gray.

2 Days to Fitness

Get the Most
Confident Body of Your Life
With Only
2 Workouts a Week

Your Fit Perspective

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The background of the page is a light blue wooden surface. Several burritos are scattered across the surface. One burrito is at the top, another is in the middle right, and a third is at the bottom. A single green leaf is also visible on the right side. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the left side of the page, containing the text.

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Introduction



The Problem with Modern Fitness

To put it bluntly, modern fitness is not about the average person anymore. It's about the extremes.

Who lifts the most weight? Who looks the best in a swimsuit? Who has the weirdest, strictest diet?

As entertaining as it may be, these extremes are making fitness more unapproachable than ever. It makes the average person feel that if they can't work out 7 days a week like they do, or completely cut out carbs like they do, or run 10 miles a day like they do, they'll never achieve the fitness they've always desired.

The goal of this book is to bring fitness back to the average person and remind you that “healthy” does NOT have to look like how it does on social media. Healthy just means you're moving a little more, eating a little better, and yet -- despite such little work put in -- you're feeling the best you have in years.

What Health and Fitness Really Means

Step away from the world of social media and think about what health and fitness really means for you.

What comes to mind?

Confidence

Many people will say confidence. If you think about it, the desire to lose weight mainly comes from a desire to be happier in your own skin. Imagine going out in any of your favorite clothes without subconsciously stressing about how you look. How about wearing any kind of bathing suit and never second-guessing how it fits you? Without confidence, these little moments add up and cause a lot of stress and insecurity in people.

So, the goal isn't just to lose a few pounds. If you were to lose 50lbs right this instant, but look exactly the same, would you be any happier? Probably not. And that's how you know it's not literally a weight issue. It's (partly) a confidence issue. What other parts are there?

Energy

But what else comes to mind when you think of being fit? A lot of people will also say energy. As the years pass by, it seems like your energy tank gets smaller and smaller. Days become more of a drag, and at some point you might feel like a complete zombie. Get up, take care of the kids, go to work, come back, go to sleep. Same cycle every day, and every day forcing yourself forward despite constant protest from your body.

If this hits home, then not only are you exercising for confidence, you're exercising to get your time back. More energy means more time you can spend with your family, with your friends, and just doing the things you love to do.

Lifelong Independence

There's one more piece that most people never think about.

Have you ever seen someone - either the same age or a bit older than you - yet they move as if they're 60 years old? Complaining about a stiff back, needing help lifting things that used to be no problem, and getting winded after the most basic of tasks like walking a flight of stairs?

Most people blame this decline on age, which is partly true. As you age, your body goes through something called Sarcopenia, the natural loss of muscle over time. Sarcopenia kicks in as early as 30 years old, and it only accelerates every year. Each year that passes, more muscle is lost, meaning less strength, less stamina, and weaker joints.

As scary as this sounds, there is thankfully a proven way to stop or even reverse Sarcopenia, and that's resistance training (exactly what you'll learn in this book). So, by investing in your health today, you're investing in your health AND independence for the rest of your life.

Just like how people always say to "invest in stocks early, and you'll be a millionaire when you retire." Invest a couple hours a week now, and you'll maintain a strong, youthful body even by the time you retire. You'll look back at your friends and colleagues who didn't make that investment, and the difference will be obvious. It's as if you went back in time by 40 years.

Summary

In summary, what does health and fitness mean to you? If you're just an average person looking to be healthier -- not a fitness fanatic wanting 6-pack abs and to bench press 400lbs -- then this is likely what it means for you:

- A body you're confident in, so you can live life without ever second-guessing yourself.
- A body that gives you more energy, so you can spend more time with the friends, family, and hobbies you've been missing out on.
- A body that gives you a lifetime of strength and independence, so you can continue living life on your own terms no matter what age

How To Use This Book

This book is laid out into 2 main sections: building your workout, then building your nutrition plan. Each section is essentially written in step-by-step chapters. While you could jump straight into the chapters you're most curious about, it's best to at least skim through each chapter in order on your first read. Then, you can use this book like a manual or an encyclopedia; you'll refer back to it only for specific problems or questions you have in the future.

Chapter 1:

Set A Schedule

January

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
						8
2	3	4	5	6	7	15
9	10	11	12	13	14	22
16	17	18	19	20	21	28
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Since you're only working out twice a week, this should be easy. However, there are a few considerations that can influence your decision.

Consistency

The number one factor you need to consider is consistency; what time will let you work out every week without interruption?

Having an inconsistent routine (where you may skip one or both workouts in a given week) will make your entire plan fall apart. That's exactly why we set the bar so low -- you're only working out twice a week, so there should be very little reason not to stay consistent.

But life happens. You can have a plan for everything, and the unpredictable will still knock you down.

Here are a few tips to keep your workouts as consistent as possible:

Early Morning Workouts

If you're like most people, the early morning is probably the only time of day you have for yourself. It doesn't have to be 5am. It can be an hour or two before you get your day started.

The beginning of the day seems more consistent than the end of the day. If you think about all the last-minute changes to your agenda, you'll notice it usually happens in the afternoon and evening.

For that reason, if you complete your workout in the morning, you're less likely to get interrupted, so you're less likely to skip it.

Stick to the Same Times and Days

Even if your work schedule is always different, it's best to try and stick to the same times and days for your workout routine.

If you absolutely have to change the days and times each week, try to pair your workouts with some other commitment that you're consistent with.

An easy example would be to exercise as soon as you get home. You may get home at different times because of your work schedule or other priorities, but you'll always come home at some point. By pairing your workouts with a habit you've already built (coming home from work), it'll be much easier to make the workout a habit as well. Just make sure you go straight to your workout as soon as you get home. If you come home and start random activities (making dinner, cleaning, etc.), you're less likely to get to that workout.

And note that while it might be weird to consider coming home from work a "habit," that's essentially what it is. In fact, if you can take the most obvious and mundane parts of your daily routine and call them "habits," you'll find plenty of opportunities to fit a good workout in.

Here are some other examples:

- Immediately before/after a meal
- After dropping off or picking up your kids from school
- Right before you normally take a shower

Choose A No/Low-Context Environment

A no/low-context environment means a room (or part of a room) that you don't associate with anything relaxing or de-stressing.

For example, your bedroom. Everyone's bedroom is associated with rest and relaxation because that's where we always sleep. Even if you do other things in your bedroom, sleep is the most consistent, so it likely paints how you see your entire bedroom.

The Problem with High-Context Rooms

The problem is, it's really hard to work out in a place you normally relax in. Your body is so used to letting its guard down that it will actively fight against you when you try to work out. That's why home-workouts in general (especially in your bedroom) are so much harder to commit to versus going to the gym. It has nothing to do with space or equipment. It has everything to do with the context that you've already built with your home.

Examples of Low-Context Rooms

With that said, try to find a room in your house that has little or no context like that already. An easy example would be a garage or basement since most people just use those rooms for storage. When you make that your dedicated workout room, your body will instantly go into "workout mode" the second you step in. You'll have stronger workouts, and you won't quit halfway through because your body won't fight you the entire time.

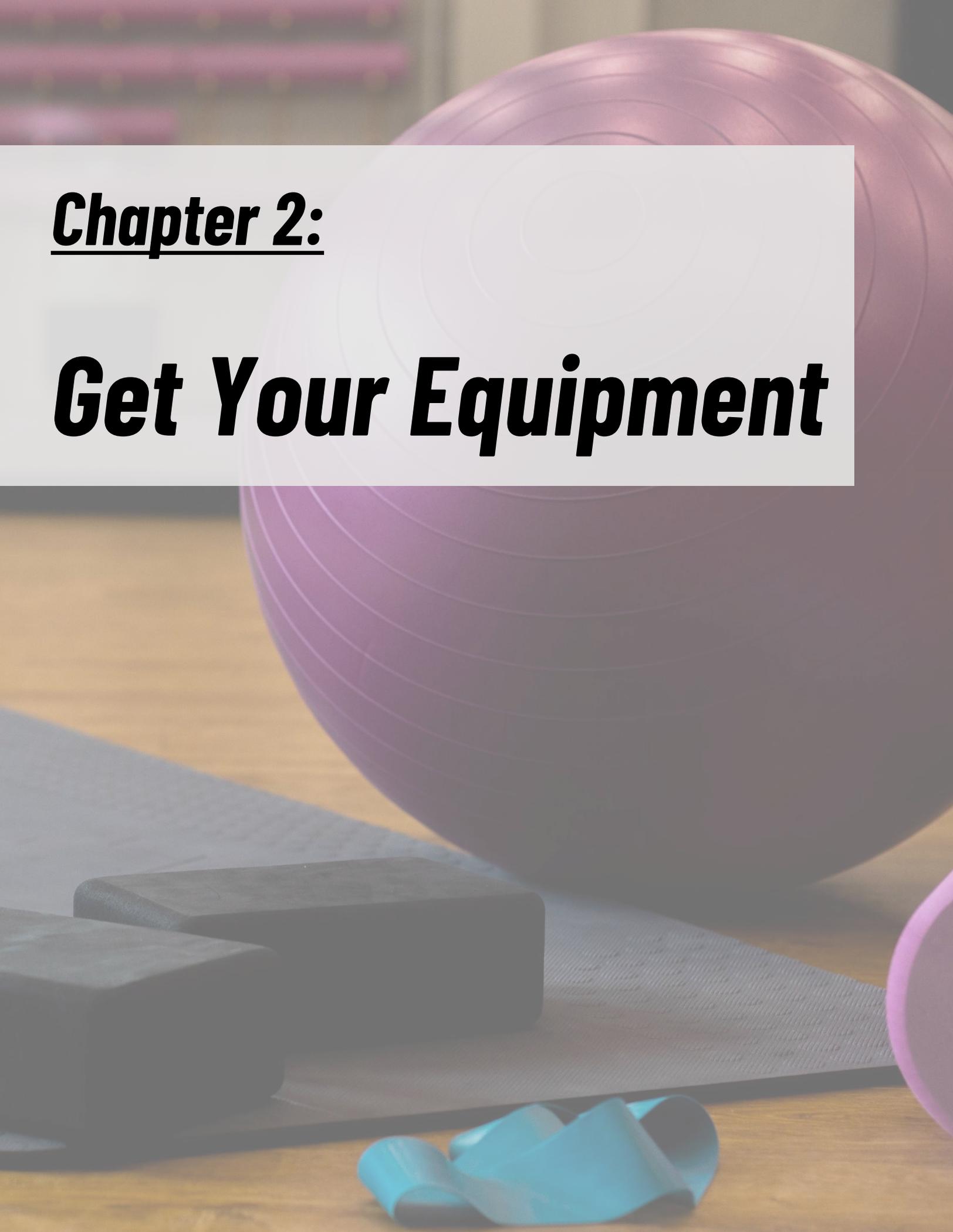
What If I Don't Have Enough Space?

If you're living in a small space, you have three options: work out at a gym, work out outside (like in a park), or choose any room in your house and work out in a spot you rarely occupy.

That last point is going to need some explaining.

Have you ever re-arranged the furniture in a room, sat down on the newly positioned couch, and felt like you're in a completely different room? Or at the very least, you just feel "different" seeing the room from a new angle? That's one way to create a small no/low-context space within a room.

If there's a corner of your bedroom that you never spend time in, make that your workout corner. Move as much furniture as you need to make it work. It'll be worth the "workout mode" you'll experience that will keep you on track for months on end.

A large purple exercise ball is the central focus, resting on a grey mat. In the foreground, there are two black foam blocks and a blue resistance band. The background shows a wooden floor and a blurred shelf with pink items.

Chapter 2:

Get Your Equipment

Now that you know when and where you're going to exercise, it's time to gather your equipment. If you plan to work out at a gym, you should still read this part. You'll never know when you'll need a home-workout during a busy day.

Luckily too, home equipment does not have to be complicated. In fact, you only need 2-5 pieces of equipment to handle years of exercise.

The Beginner Set

- Yoga Ball
- Set of Resistance Bands

The Intermediate Set

- The Beginner Set plus:
- Adjustable Bench
- Adjustable Dumbbells

The Advanced Set

- The Intermediate Set plus:
- At-home squat rack
- Olympic barbell
- Set of weight plates

That's literally all you need. Why? Because each piece of equipment is flexible and futureproof.

Flexible Equipment

In this case, flexible means it can perform many different exercises rather than just specializing in a few.

Think of the Thigh Master that was popular a few decades ago. It sold like crazy, but who today still uses one? Nobody. Because it only does one exercise. Compare that to a set of resistance bands. Who uses resistance bands? Everybody. No matter their age,

experience level, workout goals, etc. Resistance bands are so versatile that you'll see 70-year-old rehab patients using the exact same band as 25 year old Olympic athletes.

Futureproofing Equipment

Futureproofing is a term used in the tech world. It basically means buying a product that's way more powerful than you think you'd need. That way, you don't have to buy a new one 2 years from now. You can get away with the same product for 5-10 years.

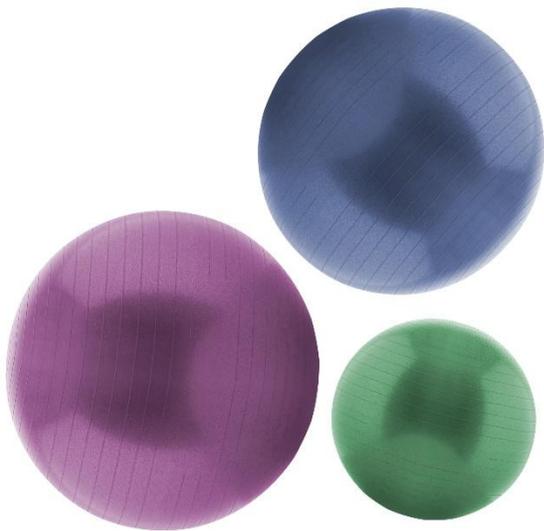
In fitness, you need equipment that will challenge you no matter how strong you get.

A 40lb dumbbell might sound ridiculous right now, but you'll be surprised how strong you get in just a month or two. If you only bought a single 10lb dumbbell because it feels "heavy enough" for now, you'll end up spending a whole lot more money getting a 15, then a 20, then a 25, and so on. Avoid that mistake by investing in equipment that changes intensity (ex. Adjustable dumbbells). No matter how cheap the single dumbbells are.

So, here's what to look for in each set:

Beginner's Set

Yoga Ball



The only important aspect is size.

What size you get depends on your height. Here's a chart that breaks it down:

Your Height	Ball Diameter
4' 6" Or Shorter	12" (30cm)
4' 6" to 5'	18" (45cm)
5' to 5'5"	22" (55cm)
5'6" to 6'2"	26" (65cm)
6'2" or taller	30" (75cm)

Resistance Bands

There's a lot that goes into a good set of bands.

First, we specifically recommend Superbands; the resistance bands that look like giant rubber bands (as you can see in this picture).



They're much more versatile than traditional resistance bands with the plastic handles, so you'll have a wider exercise library with them.

You'll also want to get at least 4 different bands included in your set (as shown in the picture). Having different bands lets you choose different weights/intensities for your exercises.

The band you'll likely use the most will be around 25-65lbs. Make sure you have 1-2 bands lighter and heavier than this to give you the maximum flexibility. (The resistance on bands is always written as a range because they feel heavier the farther you pull them.)

Lastly, make sure your bands come with a door anchor. If they don't, definitely buy one separately. Door anchors not only expand your exercise choices even further, but they are the only way you can perform quality back exercises at home.



In summary, here's what to consider with resistance bands:

- Make sure you're specifically getting Superbands
- Get at least 4 different sizes
- Get a door anchor

Intermediate Set

Adjustable Bench Press



Just make sure the bench handles at least three positions:

- Flat
- 45 Degrees
- 90 Degrees (like a chair)

Adjustable Dumbbells



Get as wide of a range as possible. Again, you'll be surprised how strong you'll get in just a few months. Don't limit your potential just because you want to save a few bucks on equipment.

The lightest your dumbbell should get to is 10lbs at most.

The heaviest it should go is at the very least 30lbs, but again, the heavier you go, the longer those dumbbells will last you throughout your entire life in fitness.

Advanced Set

At-Home Squat Rack



There are two main types of squat racks: cages and independent racks.

You can get either one that suits your needs, but there are pros and cons to both. Cages are safer and more stable, but they take up more space. Racks are the opposite; they take up little space, but they're considered less safe and less stable.

Squat racks also come with accessories like pullup bars, landmines, cable attachments, etc. You don't need any of them except for safety bars, which catch the bar in case you

accidentally drop it, or when the weight is too heavy for you to finish the last rep. Make sure you get a squat rack that supports safety bars.

Olympic Barbells



Make sure it's about 6 feet long. Also make sure it's an Olympic barbell specifically. They hold more weight than standard barbells (remember, you'll get strong) and they are last longer.

Set Of Plate Weights



Bumper plates may be the best type for home use since they can be used on the ground without damaging themselves or the ground as much as metal or plastic plates.

Get at least one pair of the following: 5lb, 10lb, 25lb, 45lb plates.

A woman in a gym setting is shown from the side, wearing a white sports bra. She is holding a blue clipboard and writing on a piece of paper with a black marker. The background is a blurred gym environment with other people and equipment. The text 'Chapter 3: Build Your Workout' is overlaid on the top half of the image.

Chapter 3:

Build Your Workout

A clipboard with a blue cover is held by the woman. The paper on the clipboard has a grid for tracking workouts. The word 'Workout' is written at the top right. The grid has columns for 'Day', 'Time', 'Type', and 'Notes'. The first row has 'Monday', '6:00', 'Cardio', and 'Good'. The second row has 'Tuesday', '7:00', 'Yoga', and 'Good'. The third row has 'Wednesday', '8:00', 'Strength', and 'Good'. The fourth row has 'Thursday', '9:00', 'Cardio', and 'Good'. The fifth row has 'Friday', '10:00', 'Strength', and 'Good'. The sixth row has 'Saturday', '11:00', 'Cardio', and 'Good'. The seventh row has 'Sunday', '12:00', 'Strength', and 'Good'.

Workout			
Day	Time	Type	Notes
Monday	6:00	Cardio	Good
Tuesday	7:00	Yoga	Good
Wednesday	8:00	Strength	Good
Thursday	9:00	Cardio	Good
Friday	10:00	Strength	Good
Saturday	11:00	Cardio	Good
Sunday	12:00	Strength	Good

With equipment assembled, it's time to plan your workouts!

In a sentence, here's exactly how to describe your workouts:

Full-body workouts made up of compound free-weight movements with the goal to build and maintain as much muscle as possible.

This is exactly how you should approach each and every one of your workouts. Get it tattooed on your forehead if you have to; it's that important!

Let's break down exactly what each component means so you can build the perfect workouts for your body:

The Components of a Workout

Full-Body

Full-body, as the name suggests, means you're working your entire body at once. You won't have an arm day, leg day, etc like most people promote on social media. In fact, you can get the same - if not better - results by doing it our way.

Specifically, a full-body workout means you're doing at least one exercise for each of the following muscle groups:

1. Shoulders
2. Chest
3. Core
4. Back
5. Thighs
6. Glutes/Hamstrings

Your workout doesn't have to be in that order as long as you hit every check mark.

Since that's only 6 categories, you need at least 6 exercises per workout to make it effective. If you follow the rest of our advice carefully, 6 exercises should only take you 30-45 minutes to finish.

If you want to do an hour, simply add a few more exercises for the body parts you want to develop most. For example, if you want to build your glutes, throw in 1-2 more glute exercises.

What About Arms?

We didn't specify arms because if you're using compound movements (explained next), your arms will get plenty of work done. But if you have time and really want to develop your arms, feel free to throw in some arm exercises on top (bicep curls, triceps extensions, etc.)

Compound Exercises

Notice we said, "Compound Free-Weight Exercises." That's a crucial part in making this workout plan successful. Let's first break down what compound means.

Compound means you're moving more than one joint during an exercise. The contrary is called an isolation exercise -- you only move one joint.

For example, a bicep curl is an isolation exercise because you're only bending at the elbow. But a row is a compound exercise because you're bending at the elbow AND the shoulder.

Using more joints means you're using far more muscle. More muscle means a more effective workout while using less exercises. Think of it this way; why do a chest fly (that only works the chest) then a tricep extension right after (that only does tricep)? Why not work both at the same time by doing a chest press. You save time by only doing one exercise, making your workout much more efficient and schedule friendly.

There's one more reason why compound is superior for our case, and that's muscle synergy. Muscle synergy occurs when a single muscle works harder because other muscles are working alongside it. For example, let's say your triceps produce 10 units of work when you do a triceps extension. If you do a chest press with enough weight and intensity, your triceps can instead produce 20 units of work, all because the chest is also activating.

These are arbitrary numbers of course, and we won't dig deep into the science of why this happens; but the point is compound movements should make up the majority - if not all - of your workouts because they're more effective for your goals.

Free-Weight Exercises

A free-weight is any resistance that is not on a set track. In other words, anything that's not a machine. This includes dumbbells, kettlebells, resistance bands, and even your own bodyweight.

The contrary to free-weight would be machines since they force you to move in a specific way, whereas you can move however you want when you use a dumbbell.

The advantages of free-weights are similar to compound exercises. Because you're not being forced through the movement, your body works extra hard to keep you stable.

Think about a leg press machine versus a bodyweight squat. Although a leg press machine might feel more difficult because you can load up a bunch of weight, you're not working as many different muscles as you do with a squat. With a squat, you have muscle around your hips and legs that work crazy hard to keep you balanced and to keep your knees bending the right way. On a leg press, these muscles are basically asleep. If you want to make your workouts as effective as possible, you can't have muscles sleeping on the job. That's exactly why you should opt for free-weight exercises.

Combine free-weights with compound exercises, and you get some of the most effective exercises in all of fitness.

The Goal to Build And Maintain As Much Muscle As Possible

We talked about this already, but the idea of building muscle is so scary for some people - especially women - so it bears repeating.

The goal of your workouts is NOT to burn calories.

The goal is to build and maintain as much muscle as possible.

Two reasons for this:

1) Workouts are a terrible source of calorie burn as they only contribute to about 10% of your daily calorie burn.

2) Muscle not only keeps your body toned and shaped, it also keeps your metabolism boosted, which is basically what burns the other 90% of your daily calories.

So don't approach this workout trying to make it as hard as possible, or as tiring as possible, or anything like that. We'll teach you exactly how to build an effective workout for those goals.

How To Build Your First Workout

You should now understand exactly how and why we're going to build the workout, so let's get into the details.

There are 6 components to a good workout:

- Exercise selection
- Sets
- Reps
- Rest
- Weight selection
- Progressive overload

Exercise Selection

Choosing the right exercises can make or break your whole routine.

Lucky for you, we made most of the hard decision making for you in the last section. Here's a reminder:

Stick to compound free-weight exercises.

Choose at least one exercise for each of the following muscle groups:

1. Shoulders
2. Chest
3. Core
4. Back
5. Thighs
6. Glutes/Hamstrings

[Here's a list of free-weight compound exercises for each muscle group]. It's also organized by beginner, intermediate, and advanced so you can easily adjust the intensity on your own. And to make it even easier, you can check the appendix for sample workouts, so you don't even have to think about it.

Sets, Reps, and Rest

Sets and reps often get mixed up. Here's the best way to remember the difference.

If you do 10 pushups, then rest for a minute, then do another 10 pushups; you just did 2 sets of 10 pushups.

In other words, a rep is a single execution of a movement, and a set is a package of reps put together. Sets are always separated by a rest period, otherwise you'd have one massive set instead of multiple short sets.

There's a lot of nuances to how different sets, reps, and rest periods affect the workout and your goals. However, if you're reading this, you're likely a beginner or intermediate when it comes to exercise, so these subtle differences don't really matter.

To keep it simple, you should just stick to 3 sets of 10 reps for every exercise you do, and each set should be separated by about 60 seconds of rest. There are a few exceptions to this, but we'll cover those later. You can apply this to about 80% of all exercises you'll be using.

But if you'd like to learn these nuances, here's a brief overview:

Low Sets vs High Sets

Low sets (usually less than 3) are usually done for:

- Exercises that require as close to 100% output as possible (ex. A powerlifter lifting 700lbs)
- Exercises you use as a warmup before a different exercise (ex. Some people do 1 set of hip thrusts before squatting so they feel their glutes more)
- Circuit training (switching between 3+ exercises in a cycle), so usually you only do 1 set of an exercise before moving on to the next

High Sets (usually more than 3) are done for:

- Practicing a movement (squatting takes a lot of skill, so doing 5+ sets lets you get your form right faster than 3 or less)
- To strengthen certain movements without lifting heavy (you can get better at squatting by using a moderate weight for 5 sets vs a heavy weight for 2)
- To train certain muscles more often, which is usually to add more size/shape

Rep Ranges

There are generally 3 different types of rep ranges.

Pure Strength Range (1-6 reps)

- If your main goal is to get stronger (and not to necessarily add muscle size), you should spend most of your time on low reps.
- Weights are usually going to be heavier, and rest periods are going to be longer to make up for the intensity.

Muscle Building/Maintenance (8-12 reps)

- The 8-12 range is usually called the hypertrophy range; hypertrophy meaning muscle building. Again, this usually scares people away since most people don't want to be bulky. However, it's not just for adding muscle size. It's great for maintaining muscle shape and definition while you lose weight
- Rest is usually moderate (60 seconds).

Endurance Range (15-20 reps)

- This is where most people go when they try to lose weight. The thought process is: "if I'm moving more, I'm burning more calories, so I need to do 20 reps for everything right?" Remember, the purpose of exercise is to build/maintain muscle, not burn calories. Therefore, you're better off at 8-12 than 15-20. The only exception is if your #1 priority is to build stamina. Emphasis on #1 priority. You could have "more stamina" on your fitness wish list, but if it's not #1, just stick to 8-12 since most people's real #1 priority is weight loss.
- Rest is usually short (30 second or less)

Rest Periods

Lastly, there are (generally) 3 different rest periods:

Long Rest (2 minutes or more)

- Mostly used with strength and power (athletic) goals
- Users are exerting so much power that they

Moderate Rest (about 60 seconds)

- Mostly used with muscle building/maintenance

- Intensity is moderate, meaning you're not forcing yourself to failure. You're choosing a weight where you can comfortably stop within the target rep range (which is usually 8-12 reps)

Short Rest (About 30 seconds or less)

- Mostly used with endurance goals
- Intensity is light, so the challenge of the workout comes from the cardio component. Even though the weights are light, the sets get harder and harder because your body is getting more and more fatigued; and you're purposely not letting it recuperate.

What Is Intensity?

Intensity basically describes how hard you're exerting yourself. There are many ways to measure this, but unless you plan on super-athletic goals like bench pressing over 200lbs, you can stick to the easiest metric: RPE. RPE stands for Rate of Perceived Exertion. How it works; on a scale of 1 to 10, you rate how hard the exercise felt. That's it. It's a very subjective measurement, but it's good to pay attention to because not every workout should be a 10. In fact, if your goal is mainly to lose weight, you never have to touch a 10. Sticking to about 5-8 is plenty, and you can go even lower on days where you want to take it easy.

Weight Selection

There's even more nuance when it comes to what weight you should choose, but again, all that nuance likely does not matter if you're just starting out.

Here's the most simple, straightforward way to choose your weights:

Pick a weight that meets both conditions:

- You can finish the entire set with good form.
- It's difficult enough to warrant a 60 second rest period

The first is obvious to most; your weight is too heavy if your form shifts in the middle of the set.

The second never gets enough attention. Most people don't pay attention to their rest periods at all; they just go with how they feel. Because of this, most people only rest about 10-30 seconds between reps. For maximum results, you should shoot for about 60 seconds. Time your rest periods for your first few workouts so you really understand what it feels like. It's going to be much longer than you think.

So that brings us back to that second condition. Your sets should be so difficult that you need 60 seconds of rest without forcing yourself. Increasing weight is the most straightforward method to make the set harder.

But what if you're not comfortable increasing weight? Or you tried to, but your form suffered, or it was just too difficult?

There are two other ways to make a set harder: add reps or slow down the movements.

Adding reps is actually an easier solution than adding weight, but you shouldn't go beyond your rep range (8-12) just to add difficulty. Instead, try slowing the movement down instead. You don't have to time your reps, but if you take twice as long to perform every single rep, the set gets twice as hard. Now think of going three times slower, or four times. By slowing down, you can make 10lbs feel like 100lbs.

So that's all you really need to know about weight selection.

Progressive overload

So you have your equipment, you've built a solid workout plan, now it's time for the most underused aspects of exercise: progressive overload.

In simple terms, progressive overload means you're making your workouts slightly harder at a consistent rate. You make the workouts harder by doing any of the following to as many exercises as you can:

1. Adding weight/resistance (5-10 lbs)
2. Adding reps (2-4 reps)
3. Slowing down the reps (adding 2-8 seconds to each rep)

There are countless ways to make an exercise harder, but these are the three easiest ways.

But what does "at a consistent rate mean?" That depends on your experience level. For most people reading this, it'll mean once a week, but here's a more detailed breakdown.

- Beginners: Once every (or every other) workout
- Intermediate: Once every 1-3 weeks
- Advanced: Once every month or more

Here's an example that shows someone using progressive overload once a week:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Goblet Squat	20x10	20x12	30x8	30x10
Assisted Pushup	18"x10	15"x10	15"x12	15"x12 (Slow)
Feet-Elevated Crunch	10	10	12	12

So in this example, this person is progressively overloading once a week. That means they're doing this same workout once a week, and they're either adding weight/resistance, adding reps, or slowing down the movement in order to make the workout overall harder every week.

Why Should You Use Progressive Overload

Have you ever had a workout routine that worked like magic for about a month, then all of a sudden you stopped seeing results? This is called a plateau, and it usually happens when your body stops getting challenged by your routine.

It might not feel or look like it, but your body gets stronger after every single workout you do. Because of that, the same weights and reps and exercises get easier and easier. The plateau hits when the workouts become so easy that your body doesn't see a need to get any stronger or leaner. It just stays the same.

So what if your workouts adapt just as fast as your body does? If each workout gets a bit harder, your body will always get a good challenge, so it'll never stop growing. It will keep getting stronger and leaner for as long as you can keep adding challenge to your workouts.

In short, you want to make each workout harder so your body always gets a challenge. When it always gets a challenge, it never stops growing (getting stronger, leaner, etc.).

Although it's a simple concept, it's very easy to use progressive overload the wrong way and completely ruin your progress. Here are the most common progressive overload mistakes and how to avoid them.

Most Common Progressive Overload Mistakes

#1) Adding Too Much Challenge.

"If my body grows every time I add challenge, I'll just make my workouts really really hard so my body makes bigger changes!"

This is not right. More does not always mean better.

The best analogy for this is getting a suntan. If you're pale and want to get a tan, you can do it by sitting out in the sun for about 30 minutes or so (depending on how easily you burn

up). You'll get a decent tan after 30 minutes, but does that mean you'll get a great tan after 3 hours? Of course not. You'll destroy your skin.

The exact same thing can be said about progressive overload. Just because a little is good doesn't mean a lot of great. Stick to the tiny increases that we outlined above, and you'll see much more progress in the long term.

If you get impatient and do something crazy (like adding 20lbs to an exercise, or 10 reps, etc.), you'll just destroy your body with overtraining. And by the way, overtraining leads to backwards results -- your body will regress week after week rather than progress.

#2) Adding Challenge Too Often or Not Often Enough

This is a less obvious mistake as there's no clear guideline on how often you should be adding challenge. The only way to know for sure is to try. Start with adding challenge once a week to as many exercises as you can. Your workouts should get noticeably harder, but you shouldn't be struggling to keep up. If you are, try adding challenge either to less exercises or less often; so once every other week.

Alternatively, if you notice zero difference in challenge when you add challenge once a week, try doing it more often.

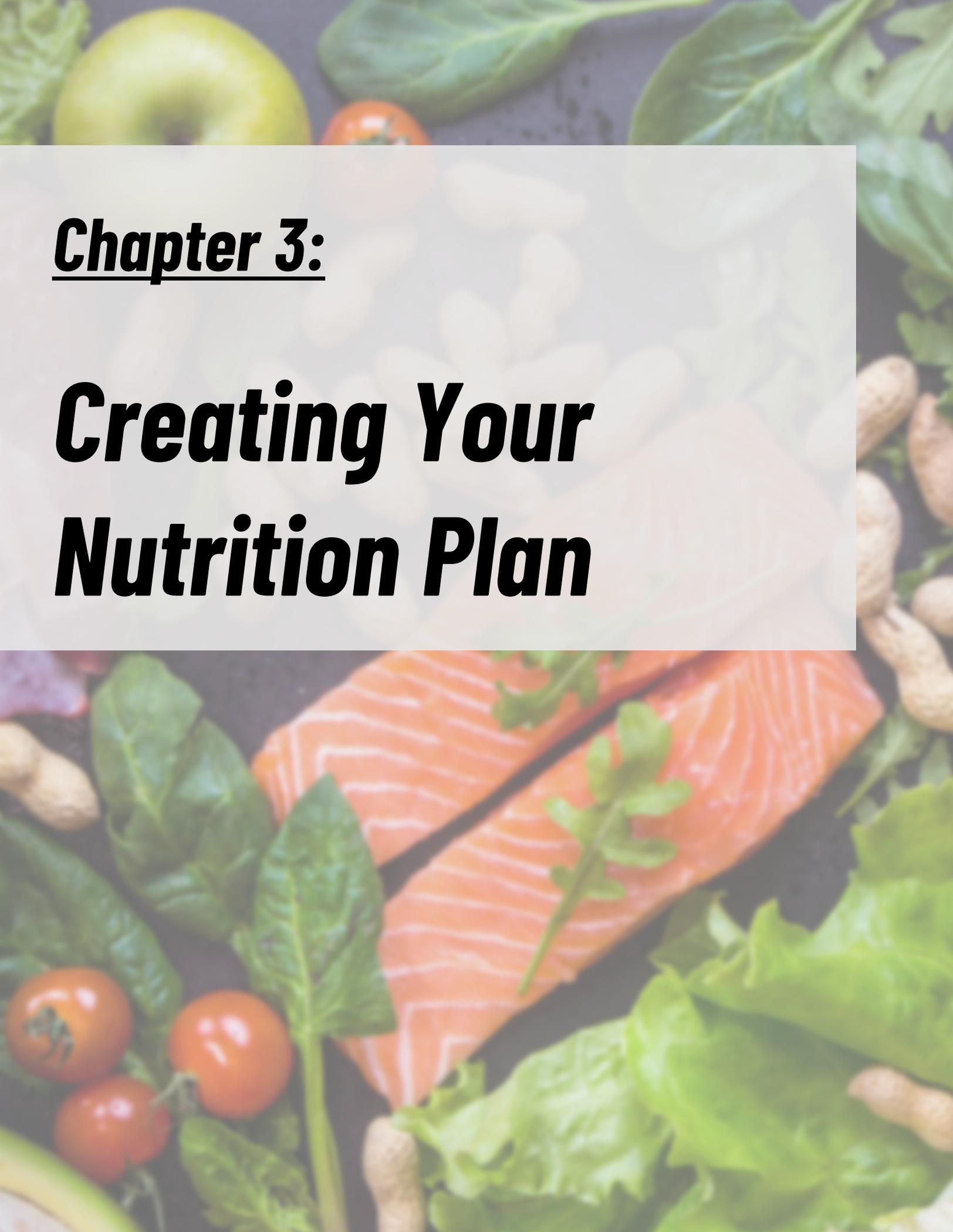
#3) Breaking Plateaus By Changing The Workout Entirely

While it can be very beneficial to completely change your routine with new exercises, this should not be your first choice when faced with a plateau. There's an old exercise practice called "muscle confusion" which states that you need to constantly change up your exercises so your body doesn't get use to the same thing all the time.

It's not technically a myth because it's true; if you switch up your exercises often, your body won't get use to doing the same thing all the time, and therefore you're less likely to hit a plateau. But people rely on this method way too much.

The main problem with this approach is stress. Having a new routine every 2-4 weeks (about how long it takes to hit a plateau) means 8 brand new exercise you have to learn. Not only do you have to come up with new exercises, you have to learn the form and technique, then you have to spend a couple week practicing them. You can probably tough it out the first time, but eventually you'll drop the routine for being too much of a hassle.

Save yourself the time and stress by only changing your routine when progressive overload fails. When you can't get yourself to add more weight or add reps to any of your exercises anymore, that's when you seek new exercises. How long does that take? For some it can take 4 week, for some it can take 4 months! Just like the last point, the only way to know is to try until you can't any more.

A collage of fresh ingredients including green apples, spinach, tomatoes, almonds, and salmon. The background is a dark grey surface with various items scattered across it. In the top left, there's a green apple and some spinach leaves. In the top right, more spinach and a tomato are visible. In the center, a white bowl filled with almonds is partially obscured by a semi-transparent white box containing text. In the bottom left, there are several cherry tomatoes and more spinach. In the bottom right, there's a piece of salmon and some leafy greens.

Chapter 3:

***Creating Your
Nutrition Plan***

Disclaimer:

Nutrition is a very complex field. Even with all the PhD's in the world, humans have barely scratched the surface on the true relationship between food and the human body.

With that said, everything we cover will be what generally works for most people trying to lose weight and just starting their fitness journey. Consult a registered dietitian, nutritionist, or your doctor before following any of the advice laid out ahead.

Always Start With Protein

No matter your goals, the first nutrient that deserves the most attention is protein.

Why Is Protein Important?

Most people think protein is just for building muscle. They think of massive bodybuilders who down buckets of protein shakes to "get huge."

Luckily, that stereotype is fading as more average people are gaining access to good information.

However, there's still a lot of misunderstanding about protein, so let's break that down before we determine how much of it you need every day.

There are 2 main reasons why you need to start with protein: muscle maintenance and satiety.

Muscle Maintenance

As we've emphasized a hundred times by now, the goal of exercise is to maintain as much muscle as possible. The more muscle you keep, the more definition your body keeps AND the stronger your metabolism stays.

A lot of people don't know they need MORE protein when losing weight than gaining weight. The reason is for something called the Calorie Sparing Effect of Protein

Basically, when you're eating more calories than you burn (calorie surplus) to gain weight, all of the protein you eat is used for muscle and other bodily tissues. When you're eating less calories than you burn (calorie deficit) to lose weight, some of that protein still goes to muscle, but a lot also gets sacrificed for energy.

In other words, since your body wastes a lot of your protein on energy, you need to eat even more protein to make up for that waste. Therefore, you need more protein when losing weight. How much exactly? We'll tell you in just a bit.

Satiety:

While the first reason was a physical reason, this is more of a mental reason.

Protein is a very satisfying nutrient, meaning you don't need to eat a lot of it to feel full. This is because of how complex the molecule is. They take more time to break down, therefore you feel fuller for longer than if you filled up on carbs.

To be clear, that doesn't make carbs bad. It just means you're less likely to be satisfied from a carb-heavy meal than a protein-heavy meal.

Hunger and cravings are what kill long-term success. Everyone has the willpower to deal with hunger for a few weeks, but after that, it starts to really disrupt your normal life. Your performance at work starts to suffer, and you likely end up quitting the diet

Protein helps prevent that by keeping you full for very few calories. Fat does a similar thing, but it has a lot more calories per gram, so it's a bit counter-intuitive. Again, this doesn't make fat bad either.

How Much Protein Do I Need?

Everyone has a different answer for this as well, but here's what you need to know:

You need anywhere between 0.8 to 1.2g of protein per lb of bodyweight

So if you weigh about 150lbs, you'll need somewhere between 120g and 180g

You'll need more protein if one or both conditions apply to you:

- You're trying to lose bodyfat
- You don't have that many pounds to lose (10-30lbs)

So you don't need as much protein if 1) you're mostly trying to gain muscle or 2) you have a lot of weight to lose (30lbs or more).

If you're not totally sure what applies for you, shoot for 1.2g.

It doesn't hurt to have more protein (which is another myth; "too much" protein does not automatically make you gain bodyfat) so it's better to have more protein than your body needs instead of less.

Hitting Your Daily Protein Target

Choosing Protein Sources

You know your protein target, now you have to hit it.

The easiest way to do so is to think of "protein sources" as just three different categories:

- Animal Based
- Tofu/Seitan
- Supplements

What About Other Plant-Based Protein Sources

Yes, there are many other foods that have protein, but they're not dense enough to be considered a reliable source.

For example, a lot of people say broccoli is a "high protein" vegetable. That's technically true when you compare protein content to calories. However, if you compare protein to

the actual amount you have to eat, it's completely unrealistic. To get 25g of protein from chicken breast, you only have to eat about 4oz. How much broccoli do you need for 25g? About 10 cups. So, which would you rather eat every meal? A 4oz chicken breast? Or 10 cups of Broccoli? And that's just to get 25g. Imagine how much broccoli it takes to hit 150g.

So, for that reason, we're going to ignore most plant-based sources of protein. But we encourage you to do your own research since – as mentioned above – nutrition is very nuanced.

With that said, we'll just stick to the 3 categories listed above.

Now the goal is to make sure every single meal has at least one of the three categories in it. How much you need depends on your protein goal and -- more importantly -- how often you eat.

Meal Frequency And Protein

Let's first dispel a common fitness myth.

Eating more often does not speed up your metabolism. There is direct relationship between meal frequency and metabolic speed.

However, eating more often makes hitting your protein goal much easier

For example, if you need 150g protein, and you only eat twice a day, here's what that might look like

- Meal 1: 75g Protein
- Meal 2: 75g Protein

Which translates to:

- Meal 1: About 12oz chicken breast
- Meal 2: About 12oz chicken breast

So if you're only eating twice, you have to eat a TON of protein during each meal, which is very hard.

But imagine if you ate three times a day? It would instead look like this:

- Meal 1: 50g
- Meal2
- Meal3

Which translates to:

- Meal 1: 8oz chicken breast
- Meal2
- Meal3

8oz is a lot more realistic than 12oz right? But wait, we can make it even easier:

- Meal1: 2 scoops of protein (50g)
- Meal2: 6oz Chicken breast
- Meal3
- Meal4

So by taking a protein shake in the morning (or whenever it's most convenient), you can greatly reduce how much protein you need for the rest of the day.

For that reason alone, meal frequency is very important. The more often you eat, even if it's just a protein shake, the easier it is to hit your protein target

Meal Frequency And Schedule

The only downside to having more meals is time. If you have a busy schedule, there's no way you can get 4 different meals in. That's where supplements come to the rescue. You can get 50g of protein from a single shake, which takes just a minute to prepare and drink.

Most people are busiest in the morning, which is why breakfast is often the most-skipped meal. That's the perfect opportunity to have a shake. If you want to make it even faster, or if you keep forgetting, try having the shake ready the night before. Just put the powder in the blender bottle and leave it for the morning (without any liquid). That way as soon as you get to the kitchen, you see it, fill it with water/milk, and drink away.

Knowing Versus Thinking That You're Hitting Your Target

It's very important that you *know* you're hitting your target. You shouldn't just *think* that you are.

How do you know for sure? You'd have to measure your protein sources for each meal. Very simple but it takes some discipline.

If you're not putting your protein source on a food scale or in measuring cups, you're not actually hitting your target. This is called eyeballing, and even people with decades of nutrition experience are terrible at eyeballing.

It does not matter the context. For example, if you're eating food from work, and you choose the chicken sandwich, you can't just say you "think" it had 6oz of chicken. You have to *know* it does. And the only way to know is either to look at the nutrition label or weigh it yourself. Of course, this is a ton of time and work before eating that sandwich, so to make it easier, just prepare all of your food yourself.

Consistently eating food you did not prepare is one of the top reasons people fail their weight loss journey. The obvious example is fast food, but this applies everywhere.

Again, the best way to know for sure is to make it yourself. If you're struggling to bring food to work because of time, just bring a protein supplement. There's no reason not to have a supplement versus food from work

Practice Takes Patience

Weighing and measuring food like this takes practice and patients

It will be annoying and frustrating at first, but once you build momentum and get used to it, it'll be automatic. Not only that, you'll gain so much control over your fitness journey that you're almost guaranteeing your results in the end. The only way to completely guarantee it is by tracking all of your calories, not just protein

Tracking Calories: The Best Way to Guarantee Your Results

Tracking calories means you'll have to track all of your food, not just protein. Sounds like a lot of work, but would you rather guarantee that you hit your goals? Or only maybe hit your goals?

How Many Calories Should I Be Consuming?

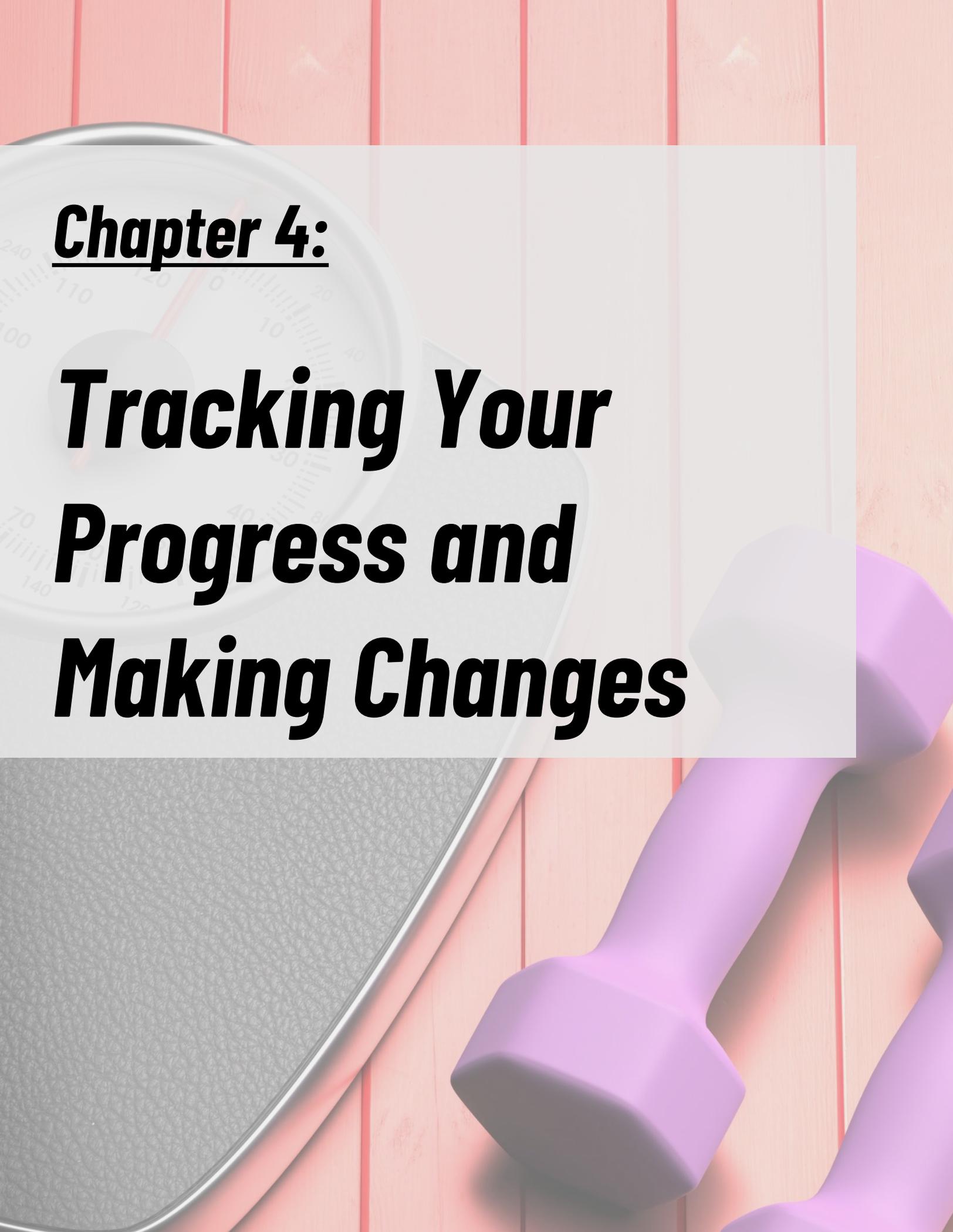
The easiest way to find out is by using a calorie calculator, [like this one from Legion Athletics](#). Here's all the information you have to enter to find out:

- Biological gender
- Weight
- Height
- Age
- Activity Level

With this specific calculator, you'll learn how many calories you need to burn for slow, moderate, and fast weight loss (0.5lb, 1lb, and 2lbs a week respectively).

Important: These Are Only Estimations

No matter how sophisticated the calculator you use, these numbers are only estimates. The only way to really know if these are the right calories for you is to put it to action and record your progress. Pay close attention to the next section as we'll detail the most accurate way to track your progress.

The background of the image features a wooden surface with vertical planks. In the lower-left corner, a portion of a silver scale with a black weighing platform is visible. In the lower-right corner, two purple dumbbells are positioned diagonally. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing the chapter title.

Chapter 4:

***Tracking Your
Progress and
Making Changes***

You have your workout schedule, you have your workout plan, and you have your nutrition plan; all ready to go. At this point, you're ready to role! Now the only thing we have to cover is progress; how you should keep track of it and what to do if you stop seeing progress.

Keeping Track of Weight Loss Progress

You'll need at least 2 of the 3 pieces of equipment to track your progress accurately

- Bodyweight scale
- Circumference tape
- Bodyfat measuring device

Bodyweight Scale

This is the most common weight-loss tool, yet nobody uses it right.

Most people hop on the scale every day and expect to see the weight decrease little by little each day

This is NOT how you use a scale. Or at least, this is half correct

Here's exactly how to use a bodyweight scale for complete accuracy:

- Weight yourself first thing in the morning, before eating/drinking, after using the bathroom if you have to, and without clothing
- Record that weight in a journal or your phone
- Repeat every morning
- Every 7 days, take an average of your weight

And that's it. Here's why you should do it this exact way

#1: Daily Weight Is Useless

Again, the big mistake people make is expecting their weight to decrease every day little by little. However, bodyweight does not behave like this.

When you weigh yourself on a scale, there are far more variables influencing your weight other than your bodyfat. The two biggest culprits being food and water. Because the amount of food and water in your system can vary drastically, comparing your weight is useless.

That is, however, until you take an average

By taking an average of your weight, you're eliminating the randomness of all these variables. In other words, when you compare your average weight from week 1 to your average weight from week 2, you're comparing real progress rather than random water and food in your system.

Do Not Compare Daily Weights

This point is so important, it's worth repeating. Do not compare yesterday's weight to today's weight. Do not compare last Saturday's weight to this Saturday's weight. Even if it's a 5-10 pound difference. If you're not comparing averages, you should NOT be comparing anything at all.

Even with all these precautions -- weighing yourself at the same time every day and only using averages -- using a bodyweight scale alone won't give you a very accurate picture of your progress. Instead, use the scale alongside one of the two other pieces we mentioned; circumference tape and/or a bodyfat measuring device

Circumference Tape

Circumference tape can be used to measure the areas you store the most bodyfat in. This includes around the bellybutton, arms, hips, thighs, and chest. You can do just one area, or

you can do all 5. The more you do, the more data you'll have, and the more confidence you'll have on whether or not you're making progress.

Here's a few tips about using circumference tape

Measure yourself at least 3 times a week, then take an average

Again, if you can consistently do it more often, go for it! That will make your average more accurate. And the averaging is just as important here as it is with bodyweight.

Circumferences can randomly grow because of bloat, food, or water; even if you're losing bodyfat. But if you average it, you'll get an accurate picture.

Use landmarks for consistent measuring

Make sure you're measuring each area on the exact same spot so each measurement is accurate. Here's what that looks like for each site

- **Stomach** -- Wrap the tape around your belly button, and make sure the tap is parallel to the floor
- **Chest** -- Wrap around the nipple line, and make sure the tape is parallel to the floor
- **Hips** -- Either find the widest part of the hip or, more accurately, measure about 3 inches down from the side of your hip bone
- **Thigh** -- Measure around the exact center of your thigh. You can stand, or put your leg on a chair. Whichever way you choose, make sure you always do it that way
- **Arm** -- Same as the thigh. Measure around the exact midline, and you can choose to bend the arm or keep it straight. Just make sure you always do it whichever way you choose

Bodyfat Measuring Device

There are two main categories of these devices: calipers and bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA). There are actually a tone more options, but these two are the most

practical. Others require you to either own expensive machinery or make regular visits to a clinic.

Calipers

Calipers are small instruments that measure the thickness of "skinfolts" throughout your body. A skinfold the chunk of skin you hold on to when you pinch certain parts of the body. The more bodyfat you have, the larger that fold will become.

Each caliper is a little different, so the exact instructions will vary. Just know that while they do take more practice and learning to use properly, people often prefer them over BIA's (discussed below) because they are more resistant to confounding variables.

Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis (BIA)

BIA is the easiest solution since the machine basically does all the work for you.

They work basically by sending a light electrical pulse (that you can't feel) through your body to assess how much bodyfat you have. Many bodyweight scales have BIAs already in them, so they measure both your bodyweight and your bodyfat at the same time. The only downside is accuracy. These machines tend to be cheaper, so the bodyfat reading will almost never be your actual bodyfat. But don't be disappointed; what matter far more than accuracy is consistency. As long as the machine is consistent enough to show a trend, it's 100% worth getting even if the accuracy is terrible.

Here's an example, lets say Joanna is actually 30% bodyfat, but her BIA scale says she's 45%. After a few weeks, she's down to 26% and her scale says 41%. See how her scale goes down by the right amount even though the number itself is off? That's all that matters. And most BIA scales can at least do that, so you don't have to invest hundreds on the more "accurate" BIA devices.

Whether you get a BIA scale, or you get a separate device, be sure you're measuring yourself at least 3 times a week and taking an average. You'll still need an average because even though it's directly assessing bodyfat, food and water can throw it off just like it throws off a bodyweight scale.

Assessing Weight Loss Progress

Once you have at least 2 of those devices, you can start doing your daily recordings and seeing how the numbers look. Again, never compare individual measurements. Always compare averages.