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**How to do the Atkins Diet Right?**

**By Hristo Hristov**

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Let me tell you something – if you are doing the Atkins Diet, you might be doing it WRONG. I have been on diet forums for years, have consulted thousands of people on low carb diets, and I am seeing it again and again. People don't know how to implement a low carb diet. Very often people fail to lose weight or to adapt to the low carb life style. Many people give it up after a couple of days because they don't know how to do it right. The Atkins Diet is the most famous low carb diet, but it is full of pitfalls just waiting for you to walk into.

Rule #1: Calories DO count. You must count both carbs AND calories

Some of you may believe that losing weight is just a matter of reducing carbohydrates. In fact, many do. Hunting for hidden carbs and totally neglecting the calories you eat is setting you up for failure. The only reason that low carb diets work is that they reduce your appetite. You end up eating fewer CALORIES, and lose weight. The problem is that not all people start eating fewer calories after switching to a low carb diet. The only 100% bulletproof method of losing weight is by counting calories. Don't rely on simply reducing carbohydrates. Eat less carbs AND less calories. Count calories! It is much easier to restrict calories when you are on a low carb diet, because you won't feel as hungry as with high-carb diets.

Rule #2: Going straight to 20 grams of carbs per day is a NO-NO

The Atkins Diet has you eating only 20 grams of carbs a day during the first two weeks on the diet. After that, you are advised to gradually increase the number of carbs you eat. I strongly urge you to reverse the order of events. Start eating 80 or more grams of carbs per day, count calories and then reduce them more if you want to.

My reasoning for doing so is very simple. During the adaptation period you will lack energy because you have taken out the carbs, and you need time to make the fat burning enzymes to use more fat for

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fuel. If you suddenly start eating a super low amount of carbs, you will feel totally out of energy, because your body cannot manufacture quickly that many fat burning enzymes. However, when you reduce the carbohydrates GRADUALLY, you give your body a chance to adapt to the diet without the misery of being lethargic.

You can even start by eating 150 grams of carbs a day for the first week, and then reduce them to 100 grams for the second and so on. You won't be so fatigued, and because you count calories you are losing weight.

You should expect a period of about one to two weeks when you won't have much energy, but this will pass. Don't give up just because you lack energy. This is temporary. If you listen to me and gradually reduce the carbs, you will experience a much less-pronounced drop of physical and mental performance.

**Rule #3: Calories control your bodyweight, NOT carbohydrates.**

If you eat less calories than you burn, you are going to lose weight no matter how many carbs you consume. You don't need to go super low on the carbohydrates to experience the typical loss of appetite that is so important to be successful at dieting. I eat about 50–80 grams of carbs a day year-round, and I have single digit body fat %. That's because I control both carbs and calories.

You won't be able to eat just 20 grams of carbs for a long time. It is too impractical, hard-to-do and unnecessary. You will do fine eating 80 grams of carbs a day, as long as you count calories.

**Rule #4: Don't give up your coffee**

Atkins advises that you avoid caffeine and only drink decaffeinated coffee. This is totally unnecessary. If you are used to drinking coffee, just continue to do so. You will have a much easier adaptation period. Coffee makes your body burn more fat, and helps you adapt to fat burning faster. Coffee also suppresses your appetite, and has a mild thermogenic effect (you burn more calories). Last but not least, coffee is very addictive and hard to give up. I know a couple of people who gave up the Atkins Diet just because he says to stop drinking coffee! I am telling you – coffee will help your weight loss efforts. It is totally unnecessary to give it up.

**Rule #5: Don't avoid milk and yogurt products**

Eating plain yogurt is associated with weight loss for some mysterious reason. Researchers speculate that it is the Calcium in milk products that helps with weight loss. Whatever the reason, milk and yogurt are good for your health and weight loss. They have some carbs, but as I told you, there's absolutely no need to go super low on the carbs, if you control your calories.

Here's a little known fact, most low-carb dieters don't know. Plain yogurt has 3 times less carbs than labelled! The reason is simple. Yogurt has billions of healthy bacteria called probiotics, which thrive on glucose. These probiotics eat up the carbs in milk, and turn it into lactic acid. Now, when manufacturers measure carbs, they do so by the method of "carbs by difference". They measure

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everything else (protein, fats, water..), and what's left is ASSUMED to be carbs. But what's left is carbs + lactic acid. To know the real number of carbs in yogurt, divide the number of carbs on the label by 3. Do so only for PLAIN yogurt. Avoid all artificially processed and carb loaded yogurts. Eat plain yogurt!

Rule #6: A low-carb diet is a high-fat diet

By definition a low carb diet is a high-fat diet. Some people turn the low-carb diet into low-carb and low-fat diet. What a mistake! First, if you eat a high-protein low-carb low-fat diet, you are going to get hungry. Second, eating less fat will slow down the adaptation to fat burning and extend your misery. Third, your body needs fat and the fat-soluble vitamins to digest the proteins you eat. Without the fat you are going to get sick, upset your stomach and become severely constipated.

Women should be very careful to eat enough fat. Many women don't like to eat meat or eat only very lean meat. They must find a way to get more fat in the diet by ways of high-fat cheeses.

Fat should represent more than 50% of the calories you eat.

Rule #7: Don't be fooled by the quick initial weight loss

Most of the weight that is lost during the first two weeks on a restrictive diet is WATER. On a low-carb diet, you are going to lose even more water. The rate of weight loss is going to slow down after the first two weeks. Be prepared, it is perfectly natural to happen. Don't expect miracles.

Let's sum it up. Count calories. Hunting for hidden carbs, and neglecting the calories is a major reason for plateaus. Restrict carbs gradually. Eat more fat to control your appetite. Don't go super low on the carbs. Go as low as you feel comfortable. As long as you control calories you are on your way to success.

Hristo Hristov is the owner of X3MSoftware, a company specializing in developing training and nutrition software. Hristo has a degree in Computer Science and passion for strength training. In his spare time, Hristo gives training and nutrition consultations.

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### **Diet Information: The Atkins Diet**

**By Jason Hulott**

### **Diet Information: The Atkins Diet by Jason Hulott**

In the '80s we had the 'F-plan', in the Noughties, we've got the Atkins diet. Devotees to the Atkins plan claim to shed their unwanted pounds quickly and easily while still being able to tuck into 'fry-ups', while

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those whose tried it and fallen `off the wagon' report feeling ill and hungry throughout it.

Love it or hate it, the Atkins diet has actually been around longer than you may think. Developed in the early `70s by the late Robert C. Atkins, M.D. (who was reportedly over weight when he died), his book – "Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution" – introduced the Atkins Diet to the world.

Atkins' theory is that the way your body processes the carbohydrates you eat — not how much fat you eat — that causes you to gain weight. By lowering your carbohydrate input, and eating high protein food, your body should enter a state of Ketosis. This is where your body burns fat as fuel.

The diet has four stages, the first 14 days of which are very strict indeed. You gradually re-introduce food but opting for a healthier option - eg eating whole wheat bread instead of white.

The Atkins Diet may be suitable for you if you like to eat a lot of meat, as bacon and eggs form a big part of the `acceptable' diet, while in the first few weeks, pasta, alcohol, certain vegetables and other carbohydrate-rich foods are banned.

There is a list of acceptable foods, which you are not allowed to stray from - not even one chip! – so if you find it hard to follow `rules', you may find the Atkins diet heavy going.

<http://www.uk-diets-online.co.uk> provides information about all the major diet systems available. Download as FREE copy of the Tasty Weight Loss and Muscle Building Recipes Book, a 33 page book which you can download for free to get some ideas for weight loss recipes.

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