

GUIDE TO
**INTUITIVE
WEIGHT
LOSS**

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Intuition is the ability to acquire knowledge without recourse to conscious reasoning. Different fields use the word "intuition" in very different ways, including but not limited to: Direct access to unconscious knowledge; unconscious cognition; inner sensing; inner insight to unconscious pattern-recognition; and the ability to understand something instinctively, without any need for conscious reasoning. The word intuition comes from the Latin verb intueri translated as "consider" or from the late middle English word intuit, "to contemplate"

WIKIPEDIA: INTUITION



First I mention that the mentioned method does not fit for all people. For some it will and it is a lot more happy and free life.

I wrote this guide because I feel that fitness and weight-loss business have created an image that healthy living will and weight loss are something very difficult that only a few gurus can achieve.

For some people detailed guides will work, for some they won't. Other reasons is that in weight loss we focus a) 80% on eating b) 20% physical activity. This comes from a traditional pattern: $\text{Weight loss} = \text{eaten energy} - \text{spent energy}$, where the spent energy is mostly sports.

Because commercial "diets" look for quick solutions, they focus on big limiting of calories. This messes up the hormonal functions and metabolism, which means that in 99% of the cases the change is only temporary. Additionally metabolism usually doesn't return and the person will have gained weight towards the end.

What diet experts don't talk about is that the spent energy contains many things.

Every weight loss is supposed to be permanent change and a better life. Not damaged metabolism and hormonal system and vicious cycle of yo-yo dieting.



The opposite of intuitive eating is analytical/planned eating, where all nutrients are counted, food measured and meal times watched from clock. The program is also changed according to results. There is nothing wrong with that. Most people it is an important step in learning.

For example a diabetic person (especially one needing medication) this is an important ability. For most people this method brings problems, anxiety and frustration.

For these people intuitive eating might be a lot better. In intuitive eating we follow signals from the body, trust them and act accordingly. That's it - it's so easy. But it's not. The problem is that for many reasons (which we will return to) we cannot read the signals from our body correctly and don't act on them accordingly.

INTUITIVE WEIGHT LOSS

Intuitive weight loss requires that you don't have medication, illnesses, physiological/hormonal situations that might conflict with the signals of your body. It is based on that normally (in optimal conditions) our body knows the best what it needs and what it does not need. When in need of losing weight, it means that for some reason you have not received, understood or acted on the signals from your body. Our body is not stupid, it is smarter than any doctor or diet guru. Our mission is to adjust these messages to our surroundings.

The problem is that our biology has evolved in various different situations. In an environment with limited natural food, dangers, physical exercise and day night cycle. Nowadays we have too much food, processed food, a chronic lack of sleep, passive lifestyle, antibiotics and other medications, drugs, blue light and constant staring at screens, irregular sleeping, chronic illnesses (that our predecessors couldn't live with), chronic stress, million diets and hundreds of variables.

It is no wonder that our body and its messages will get mixed up totally. In the guide for emotional eating I explained how different feelings and physical feelings provoke emotional eating. It is an issue in reading the signals.



From that, intuitive weight loss is not a “eat less - lose weight” method. To achieve intuitive weight loss, we must do the following steps in this order:

- Create optimal circumstances to normalize metabolism
- Learn to read the signals of your body
- React in the right way to those signals

WAKING UP YOUR METABOLISM

Intuitive weight loss doesn't work if metabolism, hormonal system, or autonomic nervous system don't work correctly. It is something that you cannot fix with food alone. Most reasons for metabolic problems are listed below and what to do about them

Sleep is underestimated, but more importantly a system affecting our hormones, much more than we have known so far. Metabolism levels, appetite, memory, learning and mental focus, willpower, autonomic nervous system and mood are just some of the things that sleep affects. Just “enough hours in a week” is not enough for our metabolism. Sleep has to be regular, good and natural. In an optimal situation we sleep 8-9 hours a day. All of us know in normal situations by intuition what that amount is. Secondly, we must wake up and sleep within a 60 min time window every day - work days, free days, holidays etc. Third, the sleep has to be good. Most people sleep a lot but never recover.



Distress.

Stress is a normal physiological reaction. In evolution it is meant to help us adapt to different environments - usually through physical activity - hunting, escaping, fighting, resting etc. Problem is that this lifestyle existed thousands of years ago, not any more. Instead of stressing about whether or not we get eaten by a tiger, we stress about conflicts at work, school problems of our children, too small salary and a big house loan. Problems without a physical solution. Untreated stress will increase the level of stress hormones permanently, which will cause problems in the levels of other hormones - gender hormones, appetite and energy hormones, insulin and many others. Stress has many treatments, but basically it is about treating the cause, relaxing and exercising, and also physical treatment - sports, yoga, sex, etc.



Intestinal microbiome. Problems with an intestinal microbiome are very serious and a new phenomenon. This is why they are not considered enough in healthcare. Balanced bacteria will upkeep the absorption processes in the colon, your immune system and removing toxins. Processed food, antibiotics, too little fiber and metabolic problems will cause problems in this system. Most common problem is a leaky gut syndrome, where a large amount of toxins is absorbed into the bloodstream and causes harm in the body.

To balance out the bacteria in bowels it is good to:

- Consume lots of fiber, at least 25 grams per day
- Avoid antibiotics
- Eat natural and little processed food
- Consume probiotics from supplements or food



Reduce passive time.

Our bodies are not made for sitting in front of a screen for hours at a time. It is designed to move constantly. Nowadays we have nothing that would force us to move and the body doesn't get enough stimulation. Staying active is a very important thing for metabolism. I don't mean lifting iron and running 5 times a week - just normal daily activity.

I am constantly surprised to learn how few people walk the stairs, to shops, to work or even get off the computer more than once an hour. With very small changes we can make a big difference for our metabolism.

First and most important step is to make our bodies work in an optimal way. Only after that we can eat intuitively. Unbalanced body will crave the wrong food.

LISTENING TO THE SIGNALS OF YOUR BODY

By listening to the signals of your body I mean the skill to tell the difference between physiological problems from physical and other kind. Mostly I speak about appetite. Especially people suffering from excess weight and unhealthy eating habits have lost the ability to do so properly. Their bodies won't give them right signals like we mentioned previously. From those wrong signals are formed harmful habits that upkeep the vicious cycle.

Most typical are:

- Emotional eating
- Being afraid of hunger
- Craving for carbs and lots of energy in food
- Eating more in the evenings, night-time eating
- Irregular fasting and binging episodes
- Not enough hydration
- Replacing fluids (thirst) with food



Only when the things mentioned in the previous chapter have happened and the metabolism is normalizing, can we start to trust the messages in our bodies. Learning to understand the body's signals has the goal of understanding when you actually need energy and when you need something else. For overweight people "the feeling of hunger" is most often psychological not physiological.

DO THIS:

- Every time before you eat, take a few minute break and focus on your body. It would be best if you are in a calm environment, you can relax and close your eyes. Try to understand - what is the feeling of hunger you feel, is it thirst, is it psychological hunger, is it more emotional, is it low blood sugar etc. This is how you learn to understand what makes you eat.
- Don't eat or drink anything before you have made a few minutes analysis on what made you eat/drink.
- When you feel the need to eat to relax, as a reward or as a comfort - recognize the situation, analyse the physiological and psychological hunger, find some other ways to get the same feeling you are used to getting from eating.
- Don't be afraid to "be wrong" - you can eat, binge and cheat BUT only if you understand why are you doing this.
- List things that add or decrease your appetite, for example bad sleep, stress, physical tiredness, flu, hangover, joy, sadness, loneliness ect.



DO THIS:



- Listen to your body when eating. Ask every few minutes - what do I feel? Is it enough? What is my emotional state?
- Focus on eating and not your cellphone, TV or talking, unless it is a part of the eating process.
- Try different meal sizes, timing, foods and combinations of these. Learn to understand what options work best for you. No one can do it better for you.
- Don't trust gurus that tell their way is the only right one.
- While eating, evaluate how full do you feel? On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means you are still very hungry and 5 is overfull.

STAGES OF FEELING FULL

Learn to recognize how long it takes hunger to set in after a meal and what does it feel like.

What are the different stages of hunger? For me they are usually:

- Immediate satisfied and good feeling after eating
- Around 15 to 30 minutes a slight sleepiness, often it means not drinking enough.
- 45-60 min - a good, productive feeling, mental focus is good, I don't think about food.
- Around after 2 hours from eating I feel the hunger starting to creep in, which feels like a slight vacuum in my upper stomach.
- At 4-5 hours the hunger eases, but instead I start to feel like not eating. The liver will start producing sugar.
- If I don't eat after that, the hunger eases more but I start to feel dizzy, tired, lack of focus and I get thirsty.
- If even then I don't eat, in a few hours my stress hormones will activate and I feel better, even though I might get a slight migraine. Lack of appetite continues.



There are a lot of ways for you to check yourself. The most important is that you learn to really understand what signals come from what and why, how different conditions affect them and what messages your body gives out.

REACTING TO YOUR BODY'S SIGNALS

In the first chapter I told what to do to activate your metabolism. In the second chapter we focused on how to listen to the signals of your body. Here I will give you some practical tips, so your weight would go down intuitively.

As you may have already understood, the core of intuitive weight loss is to do things that your own body recommends you to do. Your body knows the best how it works.

Here are some ideas that everyone must do to make their body need less energy to drop extra weight.

- Try to have a light hunger or half-empty stomach most of the time. It's the time when metabolism and hormonal activity work best in your advantage. You aren't bothered by the "roller coaster" of the blood sugar, insulin and other hormones too much. For small hunger or snacking it is best to eat healthy, low-calorie food like carrots, cucumbers, pickles, lean protein, curd, apples and other fruits. Don't eat sandwiches, sweets or chocolate.
- It is hard to get too much quality protein. It fills your stomach for a long time, spends more energy absorbing it and upkeeps a muscle mass and metabolism. Make sure you always have enough protein and prioritize it. Protein snacks are a very good option. I don't recommend too much processed food, but for me low-sugar protein bars work very well as snacks.
- Don't be afraid of any food. As long as you learn to listen to your body, it will tell you what is good for you and what is not. More problems come from limiting yourself too much.
- Try to eat enough vegetables - 500 grams per day should be the minimum.
- Get as much of your food from natural sources as you can. Minimize processed, sugar- and fat-filled food and drinks.
- Reduce/stop smoking, minimize alcohol. If you have to drink - drink red wine or sugar-free cider or something stronger, like whiskey.
- Stay well hydrated. If food is too easy to eat, it is hard to drink too much. Rather drink evenly and a bit too much (quality fluids), so that your metabolism stays active and your body won't give wrong signals.

What about physical activity? Most importantly - learn to enjoy it. Too much working out can lead to more problems than benefits. If you have been physically active before, you know very well what you and your body like. If you don't, try something at least. Don't trust all the commercial programs, try new things. Take it easy, the more you focus on just the physical activity to lose weight, the more likely you are to give up.

When you make mistakes, don't blame yourself! It is normal. If you must do it, then you must also forgive. Just as important - analyze and think about what happened. Don't try to avoid mistakes. Try to understand. Don't experience the failure, practice the ability to learn about yourself.



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