

"Gittleman rightfully challenges the message of the low-fat gurus and offers the best and clearest explanation of the glycemic index that I have ever read."

—Stephen T. Sinatra, M.D., F.A.C.C., C.N.S., author of *Heart Sense for Women*

# ANN LOUISE GITTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO THE

# 40/30/30 PHENOMENON

## INCLUDES:

- The latest research on essential fats
  - An expanded glycemic index
- Information on the importance of minerals
- A 21-day eating program for different caloric needs

**Ann Louise Gittleman, M.S., C.N.S.**

ANN LOUISE  
GITTLEMAN'S  
GUIDE TO THE  
40/30/30  
PHENOMENON

Ann Louise Gittleman, M.S., C.N.S.

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Finally, I am grateful to my friend and colleague Dr. Barry Sears for pioneering the 40/30/30 concept in the first place.

## INTRODUCTION: THE NEW EATING EQUATION

THE WORD *PHENOMENON* IS INDEED A FITTING DESCRIPTION for the 40/30/30 nutrition program. Since this program consists of eating 40 percent carbohydrate, 30 percent protein, and 30 percent fat, you can be sure of getting the right nutrient balance that's vital for metabolism, blood sugar, and your overall well-being.

Created by my colleague and friend Barry Sears, Ph.D., this program was first popularized in Dr. Sears's first megaseller *The Zone: A Dietary Road Map to Lose Weight Permanently*. Although initially developed to treat heart disease and diabetes, permanent weight loss became its biggest claim to fame. Dr. Sears has since written seven other books about the Zone.

I was personally gratified to see the 40/30/30 approach so widely received because it embraces the same nutritional principles and concepts that I have championed and written about for many years in books such as *Beyond Pritikin* and *Eat Fat, Lose Weight*. I think you'll find my *Guide to the 40/30/30 Phenomenon* to be a great companion to these books and to the Zone experience.

No doubt about it—the Zone-based 40/30/30 diet is indeed a phenomenon! A phenomenon—because this latest diet wave has dramatically turned the tables on conventional nutritionists and dietitians with its emphasis on protein and fat and reduction in carbohydrates. A phenomenon—because of its extraordinary popularity among world-class athletes, movie stars, diabetics, and individuals all across America. But most of all, the 40/30/30 program is a phenomenon because after so many years of low-fat, high-complex carbohydrate dietary failures . . . it works. The 40/30/30 phenomenon is a user-friendly eating plan for anyone who wants to achieve peak performance, increase energy, enhance mental focus, control blood sugar, achieve long-term hunger satisfaction, and lose weight effortlessly in the process.

It's no wonder this revolutionary diet equation continues to make its mark amidst today's "diet wars." People everywhere—from celebrities to your next-door neighbors—are continually trying myriad diet regimens in hopes of winning that proverbial battle of the bulge. But these other approaches and even the theories behind them are short-lived and unscientific. And even more worrisome, they tend to raise some serious health concerns.

The good news is the 40/30/30 plan is not only healthy for long-term health, but satisfying as well. Protein power is back on our menus, plus the taste and health benefits of quality fats—without the guilt. In addition, this nutritionally sound program teaches us that there's more to watch than refined, white flour carbohydrates. Certain highly touted complex carbohydrates (potatoes, pasta, and cereals, for example) should also be consumed in moderation. Why? These high-glycemic (fast-acting) carbohydrates raise insulin—a fat-storage hormone (more about this in Chapter 3).

Simply put, lowered insulin levels mean that the body won't store as much fat after food has been metabolized to glucose or sugar. Moreover, we can better access stored body fat for energy as well as ward off hunger because our own blood sugar is on an even keel. Since this program is based upon clinical studies with athletes,

diabetics, and people who wanted to lose weight at such prestigious institutions as Pepperdine University and Sansum Medical Research Foundation in Santa Barbara, California, we can feel confident in adopting it as a way of life.

Athletes in particular should take note. Harvard's Marcus Elliott, M.D., believes that if you want to burn body fat, the 40/30/30 program is significantly superior to the high-carbohydrate, low-fat approach. Dr. Elliott supervised a clinical study at the Sports Institute of South Africa with the world-renowned exercise physiologist Dr. Tim Noakes. The study involved trained cyclists who were monitored via blood workups and body parameters. Dr. Elliott concluded the following facts after the study was completed:

- The higher-protein regimen enabled the subjects to use significantly more fat for energy, including stored fat, than did a high-carbohydrate intake.
- Fat utilization increased over time. At the end of the exercise trial, the high-protein group was getting 67 percent of total energy from fat while the high-carb group was getting only 46 percent—almost 50 percent more energy from fat.
- Subjects on the higher-protein diet who exercised at moderate intensity for prolonged periods found the effort significantly easier than did the carbohydrate group, as measured by the Borg scale. (This has relevance to better compliance on the higher-protein diets.)
- The higher-protein diet suppressed insulin levels more effectively than the high-carbohydrate diet, allowing for greater access to stored fat.

Yet even with such impressive research results, in some circles the 40/30/30 program is still controversial. The reduction of high-glycemic complex carbohydrates (not just the low-fiber processed ones) and the boost in protein and fat have many diet experts in an uproar. The truth may very well be, as I have hypothesized in my book *Your Body Knows Best*, that no single diet is right for every

individual. Based upon the concept of biochemical individuality, the 40/30/30 program may be better suited to the “fast burner” individual who needs more protein, more fat, and less carbohydrate for optimum energy and weight control. Many fast burners have lost weight—and kept it off—on the 40/30/30 program, a good place to begin for individuals who have failed to lose weight on other diets or who have blood sugar problems.

However, traditionally trained dietitians often recommend a basic diet with 55 percent of calories from carbohydrate, 20 percent from protein, and 25 percent from fat—a regimen that has failed for far too many individuals. Since Americans have gone low fat to no fat, the number of overweight individuals has been steadily increasing. Moreover, diabetes rose in the United States by about 6 percent in 1999 in what the government called “dramatic evidence of an unfolding epidemic.” The rise is blamed largely on obesity, which was up a startling 57 percent from 1991.<sup>1</sup>

### **LOW-FAT DIETS DON'T DELIVER**

For the longest time, it looked like the media blitz on the dangers of dietary fats (high cholesterol levels, increased heart disease risk, obesity) was going to succeed. Relatively large numbers of Americans changed their eating habits, increasingly cutting fats from their diets. Then the bad news started to come in. Many of those who had succeeded in excluding fat from their diets developed powerful food cravings and went on eating binges that undid all the good of their restricted diet. These individuals simply substituted unlimited carbohydrates (such as bagels, fat-free yogurts, fat-free cookies, breads, crackers, and muffins) for the missing fats.

Even the most conscientious and well-informed dieters went overboard on fat-free but high-glycemic carbohydrates such as rice cakes, potatoes, corn, and whole grain bread. They simply were not aware that many of the complex carbohydrates they were consuming (similar to the processed simple carbohydrates such as white flour



bagels) produced a quick rise in blood sugar levels, which in turn created high insulin levels. Elevated insulin not only blocks the body's ability to burn stored body fat for energy but also creates a rapid fall in blood sugar levels. When blood sugar levels are low, the brain (which is fueled by blood sugar) sends an urgent signal to the body for some immediate fast-acting fuel—usually in the form of more carbohydrates, from sugary snacks to soft drinks. Sadly, the low-fat adherents were fated to a continuous roller-coaster ride of blood sugar peaks and valleys.

In my first book, *Beyond Pritikin*, I wrote about many of the other symptoms I had personally observed in the low-fat, high-complex carbohydrate devotees during and after my work as the director of nutrition at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Santa Monica, California, in the early 1980s. I noted conditions such as low energy, fatigue, allergy, yeast problems, and mood swings, as well as dry skin, hair, and nails, which I believe were due in part to the lack of the essential fatty acids that only certain fats such as seeds, nuts, and oils can supply.<sup>2</sup>

### THE MAGIC OF FLAXSEED

In fact, according to a growing number of scientific studies, flaxseed, a rich source of essential fatty acids, is loaded with weight-loss and health-promoting benefits. Flaxseed oil fans the flames of cellular metabolism, enabling the body to generate more heat and burn more calories. This amazing oil performs as a powerful fat fighter to trigger weight loss rather than weight gain. Flaxseed contains both soluble and insoluble dietary fiber. Soluble fiber is helpful in lowering carbohydrate and cholesterol absorption, whereas insoluble fiber facilitates elimination by absorbing water in the digestive tract, proving a tremendous aid in bowel-related concerns such as constipation and diverticular disease.

Flaxseed is also a plentiful plant source of lignans—powerful antioxidants that also function as plant-based estrogens. The lignan concentration is approximately 800 times greater in whole flaxseed

than in other plants. Lignans are highly regarded for their cancer-fighting and antiviral properties. Due to their phytohormone benefits, lignans are valuable in helping to assuage bothersome perimenopause and menopause symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats.

However, flaxseed has another vital property. It is the highest vegetarian source of the essential omega-3 fatty acid known as alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). Scientific evidence from proceedings of the Flax Institute reveal that flaxseed's omega-3 strength can help combat numerous health concerns, such as heart disease, angina, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, poor liver function, depression, breast cancer, lupus, slow-healing bruises and sprains, eczema, psoriasis, acne, and dry skin.<sup>3</sup>

But the most pronounced effect of flaxseed appears to be with the brain. Interestingly, the no-fat/high-carb trend parallels the escalating condition among both children and adults known as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The lack of mental focus and an inability to sit still among ADHD individuals could well be linked to a lack of the omega-3 oils so essential to brain and eye development. The 40/30/30 plan outlined in this book is rich in these essential fats.

Over the past twenty years, researchers have conducted various studies that showed that ADHD youths were highly deficient in fatty acids.<sup>4</sup> Their blood actually had lower omega-3 levels than the blood of non-ADHD children. Even more revealing, these studies also consistently demonstrated that the ADHD/fatty acid-deficient youths had a propensity toward behavioral, learning, and health problems. Using the typical approaches—medication, education, and psychology—to treat them proved insufficient. I believe the missing link is sound nutrition.

Just look at these other increasingly prevalent health trends that have surfaced since the beginning of the low-fat craze:

- Heart disease rates are unchanged—still the number-one killer in the United States.

- We're fatter than ever before—more than half of all Americans are now considered overweight.
- Diabetes is up dramatically—with a 70 percent increase among people ages thirty to thirty-nine, even though type 2 diabetes used to be found only in older adults after years of unhealthy lifestyle practices.
- New health problems have appeared out of nowhere—mysterious low-grade ailments such as chronic fatigue, food sensitivities, and *Candida albicans*.
- More people are getting cancer than ever before.
- The incidence of parasites (with such exotic names as *amoeba histolytica*, *giardia*, *cryptosporidium*, *blastocystis hominis*, and *cyclospora*) is also on the rise. These microscopic organisms and worms thrive particularly well on sugar or concentrated sweets of all kinds. Americans have been consuming almost 150 pounds of sugar per person per year since the fat-free craze became so popular.

Hopefully, all of these undesirable health trends will begin to reverse as we learn to embrace the principles of the 40/30/30 phenomenon. Undoubtedly the 40/30/30 diet regimen, with its commonsense approach to eating in the twenty-first century, creates one of the best foundations for ensuring a balanced diet.

## WHY THIS DIET?

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT WHAT WE EAT AND DRINK affects our health. In the past few decades, the quest for health and attractive personal appearance has led people to try a succession of special diets. Some were dangerous, others merely imaginative. Most were ultimately disappointing. These diets disappointed because either they didn't work or, even when they did work, dieters could not stay on them for very long. The reason? These diets were unbalanced; thus the body began to crave the excluded foods that good health requires.

First and foremost, a diet must be balanced in order for it to work long term. Only then will food cravings be eliminated once and for all.

Until very recently, most diets had another major shortcoming. These diets took an oversimplified, out-of-body approach—that is, they didn't take into account our internal body controls. After absorbing nutrients from food, our bodies secrete hormones to control how

the nutrients are utilized. Any diet that does not take into account the effect of foods on hormones is probably doomed to failure.

The 40/30/30 diet is based on the premise that eating food evokes a hormonal response. The 40/30/30 diet is a balanced diet, one that you can stay on indefinitely without hunger or food cravings. To follow this diet, you don't have to be a zealot or believe in any wild promises. You don't have to be a vegetarian or even shun all red meat. But you do have to read on.

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## CHAPTER 1

# A BALANCED DIET

THE 40/30/30 DIET MAINTAINS THE PROPER BALANCE between carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Thus cravings for any of these three nutrients are eliminated. This balance of nutrients is designed to switch the body into a fat-burning mode. In the diet, 40 percent of total calories are derived from carbohydrates in the form of slow-acting or low-glycemic starches, vegetables, grains, beans, and fruit. Thirty percent of calories are from unprocessed and quality fats and oils such as olive oil, flaxseed oil, nuts, and avocado. And 30 percent of calories are from lean, complete protein sources such as low-fat cottage cheese, lean red meat, poultry, seafood, fish, soy, and whey. People typically lose body fat and unhealthy weight, gain muscle mass, and raise their HDL (“good” cholesterol) levels.

Our bodies consume blood sugar as fuel for energy, but store excess fuel as body fat due to that remarkable storage hormone produced by the pancreas known as insulin. How much white sugar should our diet contain to deliver that correct level of blood sugar? The answer is: none at all.



Since all digested carbohydrates—including those from such unlikely sources as lemons and spinach—are absorbed into our bloodstream as glucose, our bodies' sugar requirements are easily met. And unfortunately easily exceeded.

Our bodies do not need any pure sugar at all, nor do they need processed carbohydrates such as white rice, white flour pasta, bagels, breads, and cereals, which raise blood sugar levels more than sugar itself. The digestion of slow-acting or low-glycemic complex carbohydrates, proteins, and fats provides an adequate supply of blood sugar. In fact, the right amount of protein and dietary fat is crucial because it slows down the entry of carbohydrates into the system and allows for extended hunger satisfaction. Dietary fat is actually the best blood sugar stabilizer, whereas protein is considered neutral.

The longings for particular foods that we so often feel when following some new diet or nutritional recommendations are indicative that what we are eating is unbalanced in some way. A balanced diet should not leave us with cravings for some food type not included. The optimal diet is one in which you do not have to use willpower to succeed because balancing the body's chemistry relieves food cravings effortlessly.

The bottom line is that too much or too little of the wrong kinds of carbohydrates, proteins, or fats can cause health problems. Here is a simple overview of our bodies' nutritional requirements:

- **Carbohydrates.** We need complex carbohydrates from starches, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and fruits to provide fuel in the form of blood sugar for energy-burning brain and muscle activity.
- **Fats.** We need fats in the form of oils, nuts, and seeds to help balance the blood sugar level, to provide the raw materials for hormones, to assist in long-term energy, and to strengthen cell walls and mucous membranes.
- **Protein.** Protein from both lean animal and vegetable sources such as white meat poultry, fish, lean meat, low-fat cottage cheese, tofu, and whey helps with stabilizing blood sugar, promoting cell