

Coach Seán



Introduction

There is science behind using a low carb diet, using ketones for energy over the body's primary source of energy being glucose. I could go into all the benefits of a low carb diet to sell you on it or diets similar to it like the Paleo diet or a Ketogenic diet. That's how all nutrition eBooks are supposed to start. One preferred method of diet. Look up the scientific research to back up your claims. Use some science jargon to back up why your diet is the absolute best. Why your diet is far superior to others. And then sell you on it. Add additional eBooks to sell on the diet etc. Proclaim that this is the only way to help you achieve your fat loss goals that any other way will lead you to absolute failure!

But that's not why I am recommending a Low Carb diet. I know a Low Carb diet can work. It was worked for me personally. I've seen it work for countless others. It may indeed have specific benefits that other diets may or may not have. That fact is that I could find research to support a low carb diet just as easy as finding research to support a low-fat diet. But I believe that it is easier to do a low carb diet because it is easier to restrict the calories without having to count and weigh everything.

Take the average meal of meat, veg and potatoes for example. It is easier to remove the carbs, ie the potatoes from this list while increasing the veg portion. It will result in fewer calories being consumed. Resulted in a calorific deficit if we did this to all our evening meals and thus weight loss.

I have done it. I know it can work. It will work for you. It might not be your preferred method of dieting. There might even be a better diet for you long term. We will get to that later in this eBook.

But know that it is going to be your willpower that pushes you through these next 6 weeks. The first week will be hell. But once we get through that, it gets easier. Much easier. Stick with the diet to the absolute best of your abilities over the next 6 weeks and you will see results.

This eBook is not designed to push you towards one method of dieting over another but to find a way to give you long-term sustainability and success.

#LetsGoGetEmAgain

Calories

Calories are hugely important in determining whether you are going to lose or gain weight. If you eat roughly the same each week, you will be roughly the same each week. Start adding to that and you will gain weight. The body will store the excess calories as fat. Now, we could approach the RDAs for men/women and work off that to be a calorific deficit each week to lose weight. In theory that will work.

But in practice.

How many calories did you eat this week so far?

Don't worry, I'll wait. Record all the food you had. Weight it. Look at the description of all the food products. The little snacks in between. Add them all up each day. If you're a guy, based on the 2500 calories recommended a day (regardless of age, activity level, height, weight etc. of course), work out how much you can afford to eat now each day before you start to gain weight. That's only 2000 calories if you're a woman (even if you are tall and more active than any guy).

Not easy is it. And you probably didn't even take account the drinks you may have had either. That medium latte you may have had on Monday morning to get you through the am shift after the weekend. There's nearly 200kcal. 2 of them and you've nearly gone through 20% of your RDA.

What I am getting at is that it is easy to miss the calories we are consuming while wrecking our head trying to count for everything. Yes, there are apps but that still takes the time to store everything, keep track and work out what you can or cannot have in the evening.

It's tough as hell.

For me, the easiest way to lower our calorie intake is to lower our carbohydrates consumption. Now, carbs are a macro unit. This does not fit into a "balanced diet". Actually, the old food pyramid is loaded with carbs at the bottom.

But our body is incredibly resilient and can adapt. If our body can find another way of having a primary energy source while lowering our calorie intake, we can achieve our fat loss goals. For the record, carbohydrates are not bad. That is not what I am getting at with a low carb diet. But lowering our carbs can help us use our fat stores to burn for energy, in the most simplistic form in explaining this process. I went into great detail on a previous blog post, that can be found [HERE](#), on why I think that counting calories does not work from a practical standpoint.

I believe that a large portion of our calorie intake comes from carbs and processed foods. You will eat less if you take carbs out of the diet. And eliminating processed and junk food, you eliminate “empty” calories as well, foods with no nutritional value. We mostly think of fizzy drinks when we think of empty calories, hence the ‘sugar tax’. However, there are a lot more foods on the market with sugars and empty calories. Even if you added more protein and fats. For me personally, limiting carbs has helped me feel much better and helped me achieve my goals. But to be perfectly honest, this diet, like every diet, is not for everyone. There is no one perfect diet for losing weight. It will help some of you a lot more than others. But give it at least 4 weeks before you make that decision to change if you feel it is not working for you. Like everything, you have to give it a chance to work.

EMPTY CALORIES
Gummy Bears

VS

WHOLE FOODS
Cashews



Calories: 396
Carbs: 99 g
Protein: 0 g
Fat: 0 g
Fiber: 0 g



Calories: 552
Carbs: 30 g
Protein: 18 g
Fat: 44 g
Fiber: 3 g

Nutrition Facts		
Calories 396 (100% kJ)		
Calories from fat 0		
	% Daily Value	
Total Fat	0g	0%
Sat. Fat	0g	0%
Cholesterol	0mg	0%
Sodium	44mg	2%
Total Carbs.	98.9g	33%
Dietary Fiber	0.1g	< 1%
Sugars	99g	
Protein	0g	
Calcium	3mg	
Potassium	5mg	

Nutrition Facts		
Calories 552 (2012 kJ)		
Calories from fat 395		
	% Daily Value	
Total Fat	43.9g	87%
Sat. Fat	7.8g	39%
Cholesterol	0mg	0%
Sodium	12mg	< 1%
Total Carbs.	30.2g	10%
Dietary Fiber	3.3g	13%
Sugars	5.9g	
Protein	18.2g	
Calcium	37mg	
Potassium	660mg	

100 gram comparison

Example of ‘empty’ calories

Making it as simple as possible

Sticking with the 6-week challenge is not easy. Simple does not mean easy. There's going to be bumps in the road. You will have slip-ups. Bad food, missed sessions etc. We will talk about how to deal with that at a later chapter. But we do not need to add to the potential list of slip-ups by introducing defined numbers of calories and macros to consume. I believe that is just an additional headache that can be avoided.

By taking carbs and processed foods out, you will take out the swings on blood glucose levels. While you may be more full with additional proteins and fats, chances are, you will not find these easy the first few days. You will become more tired than normal in the first few days. You may experience headaches. Work through them. This is a period where your body is craving the sugars and needs time to adapt. You will be tested most in this first week to stick to the plan. So do stick to it. If it is truly affecting your work, have some fruit. It should help.

Since we're not counting calories, there's one thing we cannot do. Snacking. Have 3 meals a day and make sure you are satisfied after each meal so that you will not be tempted to snack in-between meals. We will all have different portion sizes, depending on our own appetites and goals. By monitoring our progress each week, through measurements as well as energy and strength levels in our sessions, we will be able to see if we are eating too little or too much.

Water

Drink plenty of water to keep ourselves hydrated throughout the day. Taking carbs out of the diet can make us mildly dehydrated and can be a contributing factor to the headaches. Aim for 2-3 litres of water a day. Do not drink much more than that as it is not always the case of more being better.

Start every morning with a glass of water before you have anything else. It will get you started on the right track straight away. There is research to suggest that having a glass of water first thing in the morning can kickstart our metabolism. I'm not totally convinced but still feel that drinking water first thing to get us hydrated and feeling good is the best way to startle day. Water can also help curb our appetite as well. And speaking of curb our appetite...

Staying Prepared

You should have a fair idea of what you are going to eat the day before each meal at least. Preparation is key to staying on track. Your meals should be scheduled as much as possible. Treat them like your workouts. Set times and always stick to them. If you are prepping every meal right before you intend to eat it, you will slip up eventually. It will become time consuming and you will resort to easier, less healthy options. So prepare for meals. Know what you are going to eat on each day. Study the food list and prepare your own meals, even have themes for them for different days so you know what you will have every Monday for example. And base it around your schedule

Trial and Error

The first few days are tough no matter when you decide to have your meals. From week 2 on, it will be a case of trial and error for deciding the best times to have your meals. There is no right answer here as it revolves around you and your schedule. The best way to figure it out for yourself is to see how you feel after eating and training sessions. See how your energy levels are throughout the day. Mess with the timings a little if you feel lethargic. You will find a balance to suit your health and schedule.

Sustainability

For some of you, adapting to this diet will be easy after the 6 weeks. You will get used to fewer carbs and possibly feel more energetic than ever before. For some, you might not feel the benefits as much as others. Like I said earlier though, stick with the diet. At least for the first month to see how it affects you. After that, we can modify it to your desire. The biggest trap of this challenge comes after the 6 weeks. How do we not fall back into our old habits and slowly lose the results we have gotten. There are some key points to take away from this challenge that I feel that if you stick to, it will help in the long term. You might not see results as fast as the first 6 weeks but you will be on the right track.

If living for 6 weeks with low carbs was hell, go back to carbs. Add them slowly back into your diet. Give yourself two weeks where you can only have one meal (preferably dinner) with carbs in it. Carbs are not evil. When having a controlled amount, they can aid in helping us achieve our goals. The 6-week challenge should be looked at as a kick start to our long-term health and fitness rather than a quick fix. Decreasing carbs helps give us that kick start, in my opinion. Enjoy your food. But make sure your carbs source is from unprocessed foods. Drink plenty of water before and during your meals and you will not feel the need to have as many carbs/calories.

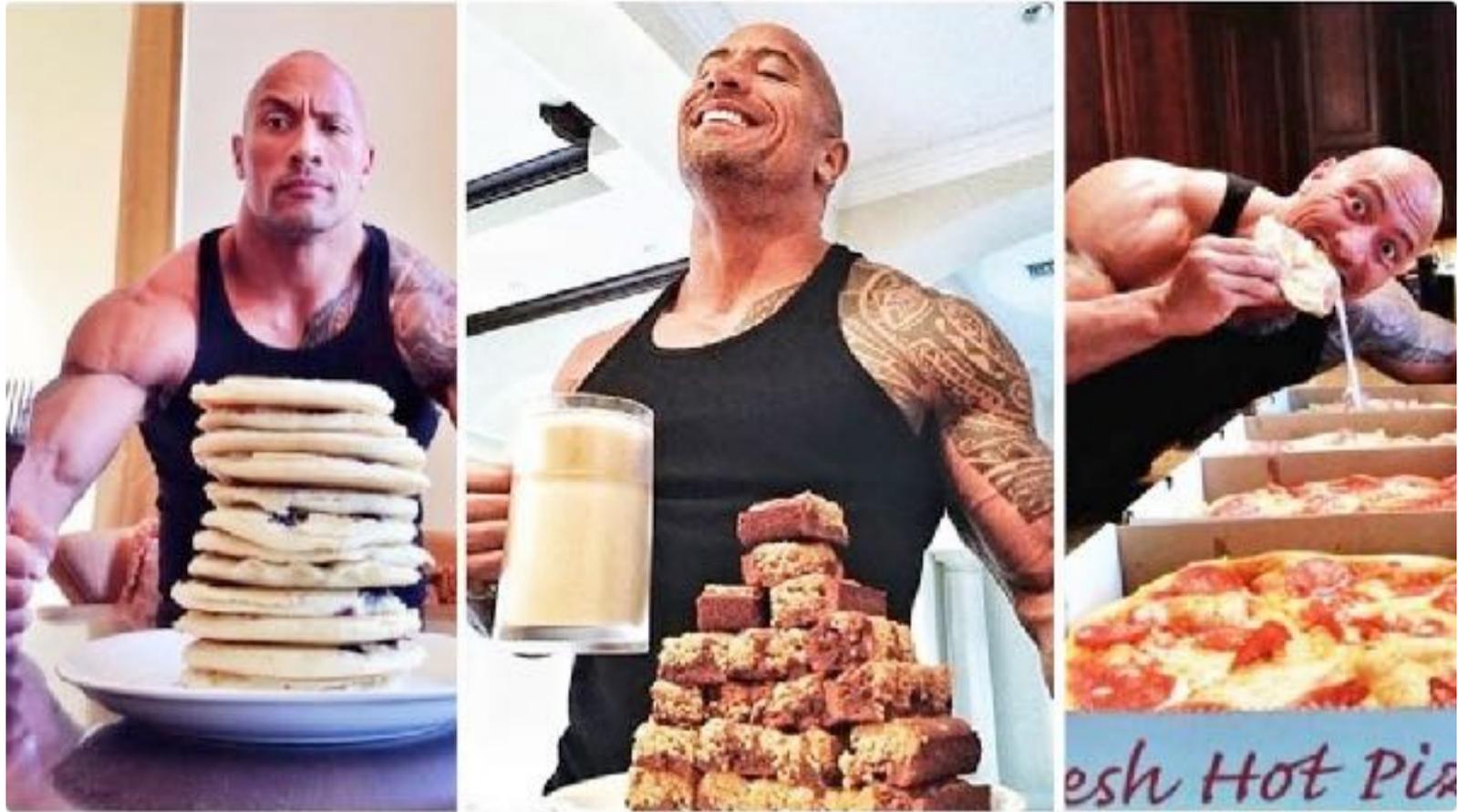
Still, enjoy your food. After the 6 weeks, don't overindulge or use food as a reward system for good weeks. But when you are out having meals, do not stress about what you can or can not eat. Especially when the 6 weeks are over. enjoy your food. Make your meals before a little lighter and plan to get a workout session in the next day. Physiologically, this will help us get back on track. Which is why I usually recommend having what you want on a Sunday and then train on a Monday because no one wants to train on a Sunday.

Stay off sugars and fizzy drinks. If you've gone 6 weeks without them, then you should be able to stay off them as much as possible. If you need something fizzy, have sparkling water with a slice of lemon or lime. On the topic of diet drinks, I personally think you should stay off of them. I think they put you in a bad spot mentally and make you feel like you are cheating your healthy eating. Although to be perfectly transparent with you, there are not many, or any controlled studies to say that diet drinks and the chemicals are bad for you. That doesn't mean that they are good but it is still possible that they are the lesser of two evils when compared to regular drinks. They're neither good nor bad, apparently. There may be future research to suggest definitely one way or the other. Would I recommend them? No.

Cheat Meals

6 weeks straight of nothing but clean eating is incredibly tough. Life will find a way of getting in the way and there will be slip-ups. But to aim for just one week of clean eating, followed by a "cheat meal" will make this process a lot easier. It's up to you what day you have your "cheat meal" on, but I would recommend doing it on a Sunday. I don't like using the "cheat meal" or food in general as a reward system but more I find this is a good time to switch off from the challenge for a few hours. So, at the end of the week, have a smaller than normal breakfast and then have a "cheat meal" for your dinner. If you are going out, enjoy whatever you fancy on the menu. Have a glass of wine with your meal. Do not be stressing out over what is the best type of food to have. Enjoy your meal and get back on track. If you are eating at home, I would recommend cooking whatever food you want, as long as it is not processed.

So you're allowed one "cheat meal" a week. If you can do without a cheat meal, fantastic! Maybe you're in the zone and do not want to break that control you have. It is not necessary to have the "cheat meal". If you need that something to look forward to on a weekly basis, I would recommend a home cooked meal with as little non-processed foods as possible. If you are heading out, enjoy your meal. Don't stress it. And be ready to hop back on the wagon from the next meal



I said one cheat meal... and within reason

Protein Shakes

First and foremost, if you're able to consume real food then definitely do that over having a protein shake. But if you struggle with long hours in work and having a lot of temptation around you, then I would definitely recommend taking a protein shake. 1-2 shakes a day is not going to be bad for us. Also, if you are having protein shakes, make sure you are getting good quality protein and that it is low on carbs. Most 'Whey' proteins should be but double check the packaging. If you are worried about overeating, have a protein shake **BEFORE** your meal. It will take less food during your meal to fill you up. For more information on taking Protein Powder and its possible benefits, check out [HERE](#).

Food

Ok, let's get down to exactly what you can and can not have over these next 6 weeks.

For this diet, we obviously can't have foods high in carbs or anything processed. So all kinds of potatoes based foods are out. Kinds of wheat, bread etc are out. Dairy products are also out. And with fruit, I would avoid as much as possible but there is not too much wrong with having it in moderation. This does not mean that dairy and fruit are bad for us. But will not suit us on this diet for the next 6 weeks. We should ease back into these food choices after 6 weeks. However, if you love your teas/coffees and can't have it without a drop of milk then have that drop in it. However, cappuccinos and lattes are definitely out!

And I can't believe I have not mentioned this already but avoid mayo. You're ruining good food with that stuff.

So that's a lot of food sources that are out. What can we have?

The Meals

The meals on the additional eBook have been taken from previous challengers of the Booty Camp challenge which, as previously mentioned, is similar to this one. I will also be posting up new meals on the Coach Seán Online Fitness Group page over the next six weeks as well so that we have different options.

I would recommend printing out the shopping list as well as your favourite meals from the eBook and the blank sheet on the next page to fill in what you are going to have through out the week. Stick them up on your fridge or somewhere you can easily see them. Preparation is key for this plan. Personally, I will be using protein shakes and having a batch of breakfast muffins so that if I am stuck for a meal, that has not been prepared, I can reach for these and not break the diet.

Once again, the first few days are tough. But it gets much easier as you get into the routine. And with a carb meal and cheat every Sunday, it is very doable! Prepare and believe you will stick with this plan for the next 6 weeks. And then put the work in!

Meals of the Week

Monday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Tuesday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Wednesday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Thursday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Friday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Saturday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Sunday (Smaller meals for bigger cheat meal)

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:



6 WEEK PERSONAL TRAINING CHALLENGE

Here's the list: (rearrange Lists in alphabetical order)

Proteins:

Any grass-fed or organ
meat
Eggs (yes, including and
especially the yolk)
Fish
Poultry

Non-Starchy Vegetables

*(if it's green it's preferable
would typically be the rule
but there are some others
you can add in):*

Asparagus
Bean Sprouts
Butternut Squash
Broccoli
Brussels Sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Celery
Chives
Courgettes
Cucumber
Fennel
Garlic
Ginger
Green Beans
Kale
Leafy Greens
Leeks
Lettuce

Mushrooms
Olives
Onions
Parsley
Parsnip
Peas
Peppers
Pumpkin
Romaine
Spinach
Tomatoes
Turnip
Zucchini

Drinks:

Coffee
Tea
Sparkling Water (not
flavoured Water)
Water

Stay clear from artificial
sweeteners and diet drinks
for the 6 weeks

Healthy Fats *(Some of
these in moderation with
the high amount of calories
involved):*

Avocado Oil
Butter
Coconut Oil
Chicken Fat

Duck Fat
Flaxseed
Ghee
Macadamia
MCT Oil
Olive Oil

Nuts:

All nuts and seeds,
especially macadamias
and almonds. But be
careful about consuming
nuts. It's very easy to
overeat. A small handful
only, especially for the first
few weeks.

Fruits *(in moderation only,
especially bananas.*

*Avocado, however, is a
great fat based fruit):*

Avocado
Bananas
Berries
Cherries
Blueberries
Melon
Raspberries
Strawberries

Speaking of in moderation, dark chocolate with 80% plus cocoa is ok... providing you're only having a square or two and not the whole bar.

While sauces are out, you can use herbs and spices to add flavour to your food as well as your salt, pepper and balsamic vinegar.

Meals for lunch and dinner are not too hard to make out of the ingredients above. Soups and salads at lunchtime and different combinations of meat and veg in the evening. It's not the most exciting selection of meals but it's only for a few weeks. Experiment with the foods and see what suits you. But prep yourself before you start the challenge. Have all your foods in. Know what you're going to eat, especially in the first few days. Also, know when you're going to have the food as well.

Breakfast can be a little trickier. Breakfast can be a tough meal to have different options for. So I have done a video and blog to give you guys more variety of different, healthy and quick breakfasts you can have. I feel it's the one time of day that most people struggle with. Lunch and dinner can be interchangeable but you'll find very few that will have meat and veg for breakfast.

With that in mind, here are some options you can have.

The first option involves mainly **Eggs**.

Eggs can be the building blocks of a very healthy breakfast. They are very rich in nutrients and have roughly 70kcal per large egg. Eggs contain roughly 6g of Protein per large egg and are high in vitamin and mineral content as well as being relatively low in saturated fat content. The easiest and obvious choice is to hard boil them or scramble them with some seasoning.



Egg Paleo Frittata

Egg Paleo Frittata

8 Eggs

4 Streaky Bacon

Mushrooms

1 Red Onion

Spinach

Some Basil to garnish

Tomatoes (which I inconveniently forgot in the above picture)

Cook up the bacon, onion and mushrooms on an oven proof skillet. Add some spinach when nearly done. Add your whisked eggs next, seasoned to how you like along with some sliced tomatoes on top. Let the frittata set around the eggs before putting it into the oven for 20 minutes. Add some basil on top and that's all there is to it!

As well as making omelettes and frittatas you can also get a little more creative and make what is called an Egg Shakshuka. A very easy to make alternative if you're sick of scrambled eggs or omelettes!

All you need:

5 Eggs

1 Chopped Onion

1 Clove of Garlic

1 Red Pepper

3 Tomatoes

Tomato Paste

Chilli Powder and/or Paprika

Fresh Basil

Throw chopped up onions and a clove of garlic into a pan along with a red pepper and cook for around 5 minutes. Add your tomatoes and seasoning followed by your eggs. Grill it from here for taste.



You're best off grilling the pan, if you have a suitable pan, after adding the eggs.

Another option that is great involving eggs, especially as you can batch them and freeze to use throughout the week is to make Egg Muffins



For these muffins, I chopped up some tomatoes, mushrooms and spinach. And poured some beaten eggs over them. I then added some black pepper and threw them in the oven for 20 minutes. Use coconut oil for a base so the muffins come off easily. Some people take out the yolk and have Egg White bites. My opinion, but the yolk is the most nutritious part so leave it in and stop wasting good food.

The second option involves **Bananas**

Bananas are very good for you as they are a great source of potassium, vitamin B6 and C, manganese and dietary fibre. Once again, use these in moderation.

As well as having bananas on the go, you can very simply make Banana Pancakes by using a single banana and egg and mixing it before putting it into a pan with coconut oil. Personally, I hate cinnamon, but it works great in this pancake mix.



Banana Pancakes, simple and really good!

To have breakfast stored throughout the week, a great option is to make Banana Bread.

All you need:

3 Bananas

Self Raising Flour

2 Large Eggs

Honey

Vanilla Extract

Almond Milk

Brown Sugar

Salt

To make this version of Banana bread, add a 1/4 cup of honey to 2 teaspoons of brown sugar. Beat in a couple of large eggs to the mix, mash in 3 bananas, 60ml of almond milk along with a teaspoon of baking soda and vanilla extract. A small bit of salt. Add that mixture to 1 1/2 cups of self-raising flour and pour that into a greased bread pan (I used a pretty small one (roughly 9 inches by 4) for this measure. I'm the oven at 180 degrees for 45 minutes or so and there ya go.



Bread Pan is key! I tried making this in a smaller pan before... **no good!**

Option Number 3: **Smoothies**

Smoothies are very quick and easy to get and, depending on the fruit you use, can be a great source for vitamins and nutrients. Be careful about having this everyday for breakfast but they are great to switch up the morning routine or to have on a Saturday morning to make it a little different to the weekdays.

My favourite that I have tried so far is a frozen banana mixed with strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and apple juice. Use Greek yoghurt, peanut butter or even some protein powder if you want to have more protein in your smoothies.



Yes, that is my favourite Smoothie. No, I do not own those hipster jars

The fourth option is **Cereal**.

Yes, cereal! Breakfast doesn't get much quicker than that. With the right options, you can also make it one of the more healthier options too.



In the picture above, I used some flaked almonds, ground coconut, chopped walnuts, some raisins and chopped up 80% dark chocolate! For added protein, I mixed some mint chocolate protein powder into the almond milk. The almond milk is a bit of a cheat in its self if I'm honest. But if you are absolutely sick of eggs, it's not the worst alternative.

The fifth option is **Bulletproof Coffee**.

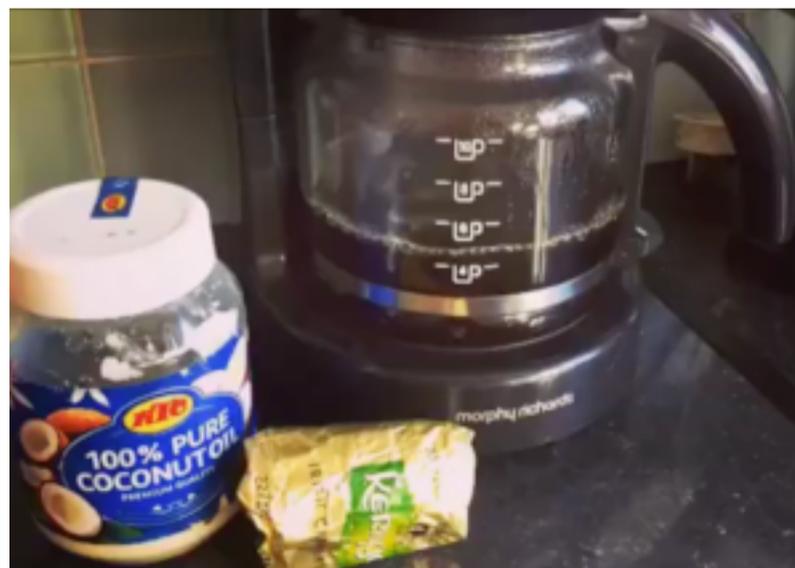
Not totally ideal and something completely different, bulletproof coffee is not a bad option if you need to have something in your system in the morning but absolutely hate the idea of eating breakfast.

What is Bulletproof Coffee? Filtered coffee with coconut oil and butter blended together.

Many recipes online will insist you use MCT oil over coconut oil and that you won't have half the benefits. There are some ingredients in MCT that are not in coconut oil. But coconut oil is more readily available however and is not manufactured so it can't be too bad. It sounded more like marketing on why MCT was preferred and I found [this article on further research](#). Each to their own though!

The Health benefits of "Bulletproof" Coffee can include:

- Can help trigger Fat loss through Ketosis
- Rich in Fat-Soluble Vitamins
- Healthy Saturated Fats



Admittedly, it didn't actually taste too bad!

Although I don't think it should be considered as a breakfast alternative, it can be used with a healthy smaller than normal breakfast or if you know that you have nothing in your system in the morning, you're not a morning person and hate the idea of sitting down for breakfast, it might not be a bad choice for a breakfast option

For added taste, include a vanilla extract. Or seemingly adding an egg is nice and also increases your protein intake... yeah, that sounds nasty. Although I keep hearing about 'mushroom' coffee, it may be next to the coffee trends that you hear about?

Me? I'll stick to my black coffee, boiled eggs and bacon.

One thing to remember about Bulletproof coffee if you do decide to have it. While the ingredients are ok for the diet, it does have a lot of calories. We are not counting calories but we still have to be mindful of them. with 300-400kcal per cup, we can't have this along with breakfast every day. If you're not a morning person and rarely eat much at all in the mornings, it is not a bad option to have this. Just be conscious of it in later meals and remember your glass of water before it too.

This challenge is not easy. I have said that before a few times in this eBook. After getting this far in the book, you might be agreeing with that statement. But it is possible. How do I know? I have done it. Here's a blog post on how I got on as I finished this challenge in 2017:

As I type this, I'm on Day 34. Saturday afternoon. Just had lunch and still a little hungry. The end is in sight and tomorrow will be a cheat day for the ages. But has it been worth it?

Last year, the challenge was a little easier to get motivated for. There was 3 of us doing it and on the 31st day, two of us had a week in Canada to enjoy. This past Wednesday, which would have been day 31 was just another Wednesday off work, work and more work. Felt like a bad day to end the challenge so I had previously decided to push it until this Sunday. The last few days have been tough to stick to it and I have felt very snappy on the low carbs. It gets easier, at times, but I have found that I never truly get used to it. It would be so easy to go to the shop and get a pizza. But I'm so close to the end that I can't do that now. So how have we gotten this far?



A Monday morning start after a night of beers, over a month of a bad diet and no training... and a complete lack of awareness that I would be using this picture for a future blog. In my defence, I was having awful trouble setting up the phone for this pic at 6am in the morning and I was up from enjoying a hangover sleep

Motivation

My motivation was lacking a bit at the start. I wasn't feeling as up for the challenge as the previous two years. As I mentioned in a previous post, I hadn't been training too much in the previous month. Football season was over. And the before picture above? That's Day 1 and first thing in the morning after having "a few" last beers the night before! I felt like giving up in week 1. But I had already ensured that it was not an option. I knew my motivation was lacking a bit I knew more that I needed to do the challenge. So I told EVERYONE about it! I wrote a blog on it and put myself out there. The thought of failing when I asked was enough to keep me going (I randomly even dreamed of eating a pizza and getting disgusted a myself for breaking the challenge... that was a new low!) Accountability was probably THE key in finishing this challenge. Whenever I was at my lowest and I thought about eating crap, it was the thought of people asking how I was doing and having to tell them I quit. I'm a bad liar and after photo would make an even bigger liar out of me.



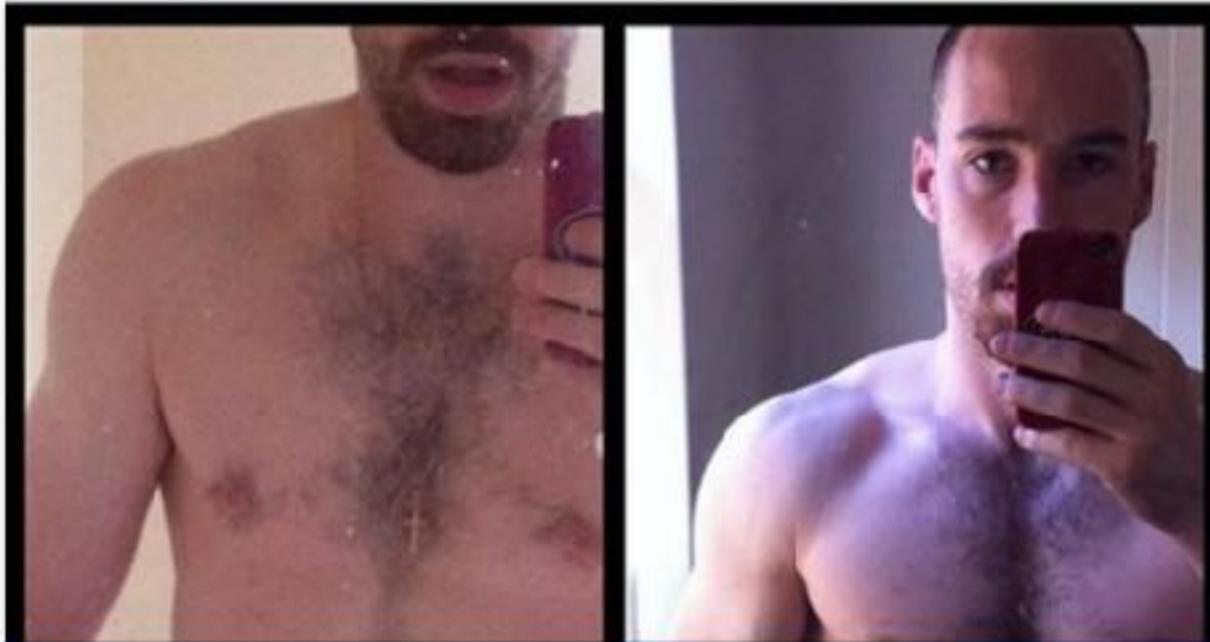
Coach Seán

August 7 · 🌐

****NEW BLOG POST****

Practising what I preach, a quick back story into what has lead to this year's strict Paleo diet, my not so subtle friends as well a s some tips on how you can get the most out of your training regime and achieve your goals

#LetsGoGetEmAgain



My Paleo Fitness Challenge: Year 3. Keys to completing YOUR Fitness Goals and Challenges

As I enter my 3rd year doing my strict Paleo diet, this blog offers a quick back story as well as tips to get the most out of your own fitness goals and the best way to...

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👤 Steph Short, Colin Regan and 43 others

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Well, that's one form of accountability!

Keeping a routine doing the week was vital in staying on track. I was up at the same time each morning. In the gym. Knew when I was having breakfast and the rest of the meals that day as well as what I was having. It leads to fewer chances of running into a shop confused and starving.

The other motivating factor, besides the fact that I knew this would work for me, is the sense of accomplishment. You don't get the sense of accomplishment from things that come easy. And while I may have completed this challenge 3 times now (unless I have a complete breakdown tonight!), it hasn't been easy!

Timing

One of the questions I got asked quite a lot is why August? September is perhaps my favourite time of year for football reasons and August is always a drag to get through. It suits me to have it in August and my motivation in the first year I did it was at a peak at the end of July in 2014. But the truth is that there's never a perfect time for a challenge like this, which always makes it tough. I've had meetups and nights out that I would have liked to have had a drink or two. Anytime I had to go to a restaurant was especially tough to stick to the diet. So I would bend a little on sauces just to help me get through it. But it's not always enjoyable...

One time, in particular, a few of us were heading out to a restaurant where... let's just say they're fond of the day 'Friday'. I was just back from a long hike and we were supposed to be going to a steakhouse (much easier for the diet) but with the change of plan as I was on my way, I knew I was in trouble. I arrived to see 8 of them already having ordered their food. With two of us wanting to order quickly so we would all eat together, I became very indecisive. I settled on the "share portion" of chicken wings and got a side of roasted vegetables. When in doubt, I would stick with meat and veg, bend on sauces. It's a slight cheat but much better than completely falling off the wagon. Everyone on that table knew that I was doing the challenge so there's no way I could have ordered chips with a chicken burger, bacon, cheese and some... actually, I'm getting really hungry and I still have a few hours left so I'll stop explaining! What actually followed instead of that burger was 12 tiny, mickey mouse wings and what felt like 3 peas in a side cup beside it. I've never left a restaurant so annoyed and hungry in my life!

Mood Changes

I can honestly say the diet never once affected my work. I always felt energised and upbeat in my classes and personal training sessions. Had this diet affect them in any way negatively, it probably be one of the few factors that could have caused me to kill the challenge. The only effect I had was that I sweated more. I remember I was explaining a circuit station in one of my Booty Camp classes (every Monday and Wednesday from 7 pm in St. Brigid's Castleknock Community Centre might I add) and as I finished the demonstration of the final exercise one of the ladies looked at me and said, jokingly, "are you all right, need to sit down after that?" That was rough haha.

Around the house was a different subject. I was ok most of the time and pretty much myself. The no carbs/being cranky can be over exaggerated by people online. However, there were times. Times people got under my skin over the simplest of things much easier. I rarely snap at people, if ever. I like to think I'm a laid back person most of the time but I snapped a few times at people being smart arses. or just doing irritating things. I didn't need to most of the time and it felt weird but the lack of carbs definitely wore on my patience. I would get asked if I was "ok". I don't know, maybe I developed a 'resting bitch face' but that question was asked an awful lot when there was genuinely nothing wrong with me... unless the question was repeated again and again. One of my best friends asked me three times in a row if I was ok and, I can laugh at it now, but I blasted at him "I'm not going to be ok if you keep asking me if I'm ok!". I was annoyed but I got some stick for that one.



Energy Levels

The first few days were tough for energy levels and I did experience the sugar deprived headaches on the Wednesday night of the challenge. But my energy did improve. Keeping a set routine during the week helped and there were very few late nights. Mornings were a struggle to get up but who doesn't have that? Once I was up, I was good to go after that morning coffee.

So what did my diet consist of?

My nutrition was mainly based on meats and vegetables. Obviously, there was an emphasis on a lack of carbs. So all bread, pasta and rice were out. Anything that had sugar was out. So my coffee stayed black and I lived off sparkling water for taste. Yeah, I said sparkling water for taste. Nothing better than a cold bottle of sparkling water! I had 3 meals per day. I didn't limit myself to the amount of meat or veg as I didn't want to be starving. I was snappy as it was at times, the last thing I needed was 24/7 hunger. I didn't count calories. I ate what I could in the 3 meals. Occasionally using protein shakes as well. Especially on the go hopping from client to client or driving to a class etc. When I was truly stuck on the road, I tried nuts and one of those Fulfil bars. They seemed to have the least amount of sugars and carbs out of all the bars on offer. And I rather have one of them than staying hungry and risk falling off the wagon later in the day if I drove past a chipper. I never had sauces at the house but sometimes they are unavoidable in restaurants so I became more lenient there. It's a much better approach than over stressing on what to eat when you're out.

This works for me and I know it will work for a lot of people. It requires a lot of self-discipline which is aided by making yourself accountable and reminding yourself constantly of why you're doing it and the reward at the end of it. You need to have that reward day and goals along the way. I set goals for myself in my training as well to keep myself consistent and to keep pushing myself. Set the start date. Prepare for it. Know when you're training, what you're eating. Set a routine. Keep to it. And tell everyone you're doing a challenge. Be overbearing if you have to be. That will work out even better when you're close to failing and the thought of telling these people that you failed the challenge you constantly annoyed them about doing. Tell me that's not motivation.



Pretty much...

The journey is important and the reasons for why you're doing the journey are even more important. Without a plan after these last 5 weeks on the next step, I will lose my results pretty soon. I have that plan in place. I have visualised how this plan would end since the first week. Typing this blog on Saturday, hang out with a few friends tonight, a single glass of wine while watching some late night UFC after the college football and the low carb pasta from butternut squash which was by far the best meal I've had over this challenge! And then tomorrow's cheat meal... well, that's another blog in its self! But if you're eating healthy, I'd stay off my social media for the rest of Sunday!



The Chicken and Bacon pasta using BNS a substitute. Will definitely be a staple in my future dinners!

The challenge was definitely worth it. Nothing worth having ever came easy. There were ups and downs but I learned a lot about myself and I have a foundation base now for the next phase. It is incredibly tough but the sense of accomplishment and seeing your results makes it worthwhile... providing you keep with the training and incorporate some of the meals you have eaten over the challenge into your new diet. Which is exactly what I will do. As you read this, I'm probably rewarding myself with my first cheat meal... bacon, pancakes and I'll even throw in a little ice cream! and that's only the beginning.



As clearly evident in this pic, this nutrition plan will not help you get a tan!

The Training

The training consists of:

Two **Gym Sessions** a week with me.

One **HIIT Session**

Two **Low-Intensity Early Morning Sessions**

Gym sessions. The gym sessions will be monitored by me to make sure you are progressing each week and doing the exercises safely and effectively. Each week the workouts are split into an upper and lower body session. Over the 6 weeks, the programmes will change slightly. They will be very similar for everyone with changes made only if you have a pre-existing injury that will prevent you from doing a certain exercise.

Everyone's warm-up will be the same. This will help all of us to move better and feel better after the next 6 weeks. There's no point in being stronger and more fit if we can't move as well. That is what our thorough warm-up is designed to do as well as prepare the body for the workout ahead.

The first two weeks are designed to work on our strength. They will help us get used to resistance training and will be modified for all levels of fitness easily. There are no really advanced moves and the exercises in total will target every major muscles group in the body.

Week 3 advances on our strength. While week 1 and 2 builds our generic muscle strength, week 3 will give us greater control over the exercises using eccentric strength (lengthening of the muscle as it creates tension). It will definitely be a much more challenging week just as we are getting a little complacent with the first two weeks of exercises.

Weeks 4-5 will up the intensity of the first two weeks of training. The workouts will be harder but we will have the strength to get more out of the exercises. It's during these two weeks where you will see how far you have come from when you started the training.

Week 6 is our finisher week. A little more power and cardio are involved in these workouts and we may sweat a little more. But the workouts are designed to give us a chance to push our training a little harder and faster in order to finish the challenge strong!

The **HIIT session** will be done at your own time during the week. One session suffices. Do not do more than three sessions a week unless you miss one of your gym sessions. In the HIIT session, we are working more on our cardio, giving us something completely different from the resistance training sessions.

Ideally, the **low-intensity sessions** will be done twice a week in the mornings after your pint of water. Just 15 minutes walking. steady pace. No phones. Clear your head and concentrate on your breathing. Slow breathing and pacing. We will be going through breathing techniques for the walks at the end of or resistance training sessions for our cool-downs. There is research to suggest that the only form of exercise that reduces your cortisol levels is walking. Cortisol levels are increased when we are stressed and stress is another obstacle in the battle to lose weight. So, ideally in the morning, get a quick walk in and clear your head.

Best of Luck

Best of luck with the 6 weeks Challenge! And remember, if you slip up or miss a session, forget about it! Get right back on track straight away. Do not wait till the following Monday to start fresh. Stick with this challenge and you will see positive changes. I guarantee it.

Enough reading. It's time to get to work. Go back to the food list and get your shopping done. Schedule in your workouts and #LetsGoGetEmAgain

The Meals

The following meals have been taken from previous challengers of the Booty Camp challenge which, as previously mentioned, is similar to this one. I will also be posting up new meals on the Coach Seán Online Fitness Group page over the next six weeks as well so that we have different options.

I would recommend printing out the shopping list as well as your favourite meals from this selection and the blank sheet to fill in what you are going to have through out the week. Stick them up on your fridge or somewhere you can easily see them. Preparation is key for this plan. Personally, I will be using protein shakes and having a batch of breakfast muffins so that if I am stuck for a meal, that has not been prepared, I can reach for these and not break the diet.

Once again, the first few days are tough. But it gets much easier as you get into the routine. And with a carb meal and cheat every Sunday, it is very doable! Prepare and believe you will stick with this plan for the next 6 weeks. And then put the work in

Meals of the Week

Monday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Tuesday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Wednesday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Thursday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Friday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Saturday

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Sunday (Smaller meals for bigger cheat meal)

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:



6 WEEK PERSONAL TRAINING CHALLENGE

