

YOUR FAT

**What it is, where it comes from,
and how to get rid of it.**

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INTRODUCTION

Here's the deal...

If you're reading this, I'm guessing that your fat has been on your mind for a little while now. Maybe you think about losing some, maybe you worry about gaining more. Maybe it's a minor concern that pops up every now and again when you catch a glimpse of yourself in the mirror on the way to the shower; maybe it's a major issue that does pirouettes inside your head eighteen hours a day, drilling its sharp little toes into your brain, screaming at you with every breath in a Romanian accent. Whatever the case may be for you personally, you think about it. It's hard not to.

As if the swarming social pressure to look a certain way wasn't enough, excess fat has been linked to a whole load of health problems including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, certain cancers, gallbladder disease, apnea (interrupted breathing), osteoarthritis (cartilage deterioration), and osteoporosis (bone deterioration). Ongoing research is continually shaping opinions and views, but the evidence on the whole mounts in support of one very important conclusion: carrying excess fat on and in your body is bad for you.

But you knew that... kind of.

The media has done a pretty good job raising our health consciousness as a country, but still sixty-five percent of America is overweight and growing. About fifty percent of that number is downright obese and growing even faster. O-FRICKIN'-BESE. This means more than twenty percent over your "ideal" weight by statistical standards, or by definition, excessively fat to the point where your health is in immediate danger.

What's the problem?

A lot of the problem is that this health consciousness business is still relatively new to us. Previous generations lived in a magical time when bacon (food of the gods) was king. If they weren't conscious about their health, why would we be conscious about ours?

We wouldn't be. And even though we've been trying, the truth is that we're still really not. We're in this sort of health semi-consciousness where we realize what's going on but don't quite know what to make of all the information being thrown at us. Our "knowledge" comes heavily diluted – stuff we hear from a friend, or read in a magazine article, or scan over in the newspaper, or whatever. We get these little bits of information here and there, but we don't really know how to put it all together. Or even that it's *supposed* to be put together. At the end of the day, most of us still don't know jack about the fat that we're trying to lose.

Unfortunately, there is a whole mess of information out there. To really learn and process it all would take years of study, and most of us don't have that kind of time. Your time is valuable. I get it. But your health is priceless. Get *that*. It is, most definitely, worth your attention.

So that's what this book is all about. Even if you don't care about all this health stuff and your only goal is to be able to bounce a quarter off your buns of steel, this is the absolute minimum you should aim to understand about your fat and how it figures into your body as a whole. Think of it as an informal education on the subject, without the fat. Pun completely intended. If you're looking to lose a little fat (or a whole slew of it), you're better equipped to get where you want to go if you know a little something about what it is you're dealing with.

Knowledge is power.

This is a suckerpunch.



HOW TO GET RID OF IT

If you really want to lose your excess fat and have it be gone forever, there are three things that you have to be okay with right from the start:

First, genetics is a factor.

Your body is distinctly different from any other body that ever existed or will exist. Think fingerprints. Though all human bodies operate using the same ultra-complicated but beautifully designed processes, your body is a unique variation of those processes. It is “better” at some things and “worse” at others when compared to anyone else’s body. It might store fat better. It might burn fat better. It might be remarkably good at building muscle, but poor at sustaining activity. Or maybe it’s good at both. Or neither. The point is that your body is very much what it is on a level that you have no ability to change.

We talk about this not so that you can make excuses. Some people will have more difficulty losing fat than others because of genetic predispositions, but very few people have a genetic disorder that absolutely prevents them from reaching a level of body fat that is healthy.

Health has to be your number one priority. There is absolutely nothing wrong with wanting to be physically attractive in the ways that are shaped by our media and subscribed to by society at large. Admittedly, pictures of airbrushed beauties on your bathroom mirror can be powerful motivation. But if you never reach that ideal through

no fault of your own, you'll go crazy unless you have a better reason to lose body fat. If you can start to focus your energy on growing healthier (instead of getting skinnier), you will invariably get closer to that media ideal as an added bonus. Your mental health will be an added bonus too.

Not everyone can look like a swimsuit model. You have to be okay with that.

Second, this will take some effort.

Not a lot, but definitely some. Your eating habits are the controllable part of the equation that explains how and why your body stores fat the way it does. This doesn't just mean what you eat. It means how you eat, when you eat, where you eat, and why you eat. Genetics may lay the foundation, but you build the house.

Luckily, habits can be changed. The rest of this book is a program consisting of a set of 11 suggestions that will ease you into changing the way you deal with food on a day-to-day basis. It will guide you through losing body fat by increasing the efficiency with which your body handles energy - taking it in, harnessing it, and expending it. Much like a river tends to be cleaner the more unrestricted its flow, your body is most efficient when energy is flowing in and out of it smoothly.

Now, grasshopper...

We're not cutting anything off your menu, or counting calories, or selling special pre-packaged meals. Those kinds of things usually fail in the long run. We're simply going to learn more about how your body works in order to gradually change your eating habits and get your body running as efficiently as possible. Increased efficiency inherently means less body fat.

Anything worthwhile in life takes a little effort. So will losing your fat. You have to be okay with that.

Third, this will take some time.

We're very big on instant gratification. Fast food. Minute rice. Instant noodles. We want everything five minutes ago. Losing your fat for good is not going to work like that. Your existing eating habits are by definition "recurrent, unconscious patterns of behavior." They have been formed over the course of years, or even more likely, over the course of *decades*. They are deeply ingrained in the way you go about your daily business, and it will take some patience to get yourself in the habit of doing anything different.

Promises of quick and easy fat loss may work in the short term, but they simply do not work over the long haul. Take physician-prescribed medications if your health is truly in immediate danger, but you don't want to be on medication forever. Beware of "quick and simple." It is part of what got you here in the first place and it could kill you in the end. Remember Fen-Phen?⁶

Keep in mind also that your body is all about not starving. If you lose fat too quickly, it causes your body to release signals telling your brain that you are starting to starve. You might still have plenty of fat to spare, but your body will think it is starving and it will ask you to take in more. If you ignore these requests and continue to lose fat too quickly, your body will start to *demand* that you take in more. If you decide to ignore these demands, the more intense the demands will become, and so on, and so on, and so on. This is a fight that you will lose in the long run. You will gain the fat back; you will probably gain back more than you started with.

Your fat did not appear overnight, it will not disappear overnight. You have to be okay with that too.

⁶ *The drugs phentermine and pondimin combined (and known as "Fen-Phen") were found to suppress appetite in 1984. A study in 1992 found that obese patients taking the drugs lost an average of 30 pounds. Fen-Phen was approved for use in the U.S. in 1995 and was an immediate success. Two years later, it was found to cause serious heart-valve defects. Class-action lawsuits are still pending.*

Splendid.

Now one final thing before we start with the suggestions...

Trust that you will always look your best when you feel your best (people dig people who smile). If you can do this, then also trust that your bathroom scale is useless. Your weight is only a number. It does not accurately reflect your health, it does not accurately reflect how you look, it does not accurately reflect your loss or gain of body fat.

Throw the scale away.

See if you can start measuring yourself in terms of how you *feel*. It's not as ambiguous as it sounds. As you gain health and lose body fat, you will literally be able to feel your body change if you pay attention. It will be easier to move. To breathe. To hug other people. You will feel stronger. Less tired. Less "jiggle" in the middle. Or anywhere else for that matter. You may even find yourself happier and more confident. Maybe even smarter. And almost definitely hornier. Measure *that* on a scale.

Because your genetics are unique to you, you are the only one who can truly measure your own progress. Your body talks to you and no one else. Start learning to listen and you might be surprised to find that it can tell you almost everything you need to know.

If you absolutely must have an external way to measure your progress, take a full-body photo of yourself on the first day of every month. It would be best if you took the pictures in your underwear, but if you're not comfortable with that then just wear the same exact tee shirt and shorts every time. Try to keep everything else in the photo consistent as well – location, lighting, time of day, and so on. You should be the only thing changing from picture to picture.

You will be able to see your progress in the photos from month to month as your health improves and you lose body fat. But don't just look at the size and shape of your body. Look at how your clothes fit. Look at the expression on your face. Look at the glow in your skin. Look at your body language, your posture. You'll realize that looking better and feeling better really are inseparable.



FUCHET

The Suggestion...

Every once in a while, forget about it. Have the deep-dish pizza with 7 kinds of cheese. Have the chicken, and the waffles. Have the burger, the fries, the ranch, the brownie sundae, and the á la mode, and scarf it all down in twenty minutes if you want. Super size it while you're at it.

Have the donut, the Coke, the Ho-Ho's, the nachos, the Oreos, the fois gras, the bacon, the fois gras wrapped in bacon – whatever it is that sets your boat afloat. Have it.

Every once in a while.

Why it works...

Indulgence is necessary. If you've been making an effort to follow the suggestions we've talked about in this book, you are probably already finding that you crave your weaknesses a lot less. Nonetheless, cravings happen.

Like we talked about a little when we were discussing hunger, there are foods that offer us certain emotional comforts. These foods are different for everybody, but usually they all can be grouped under the general heading of “not very good for you.” Unfortunately, we've been around them a long time; we can't be expected to just give them up.

Most Americans who lose a significant amount of fat through

dieting gain the fat back within 5 years. About 95% according to the Surgeon General. Most diets fail because people deny themselves some of their favorite foods. When these foods come back into their lives, they don't know how to handle them. They give in to cravings which have been building for months and then they can't get enough. A lot of these people then see themselves as having failed and give up all hope of losing fat for good. It's not pretty.

By allowing yourself to give in every once in a while, you stay in control of what's happening. You learn to find a place for your indulgences rather than avoid them. You're not going to bite your lip and scream on the inside every time you see a chocolate cake or smell a hot dog on the grill, so you're not going to stuff your face silly when you finally let yourself fly. There are definitely times when food is about enjoyment, so enjoy it. It's not failure, it's being human. Find a balance.

Working it in...

The key thing to remember here is the phrase "every once in a while." Yes, it is vague, but it's supposed to be – it's something that you are going to have to figure out for yourself. It's your body.

We talked in the beginning of the book about how everyone's body is different in how it handles the food it is given. You can affect your body's processes to some degree, but some of it is genetic. One size most definitely does not fit all, and you'll have to start paying attention to how your body responds to the food you give it if you haven't been paying attention already.

Until you figure that out for yourself, here's a pretty good rule of thumb: If you're getting fatter and you're not happy about it, you need more time between every once in a while.

Make sure it's worth it. When you do decide to indulge a little, or a lot, make sure it's something you are really going to enjoy – mom's apple pie, a 24 oz. steak from your absolute favorite steakhouse with

your buddies. Some people will have ice cream for dinner because it's the only thing they have around. That's just stupid.

Don't bring it home. If you are around it, you will eat it. You want a donut? Go get a donut. Get two. But if you bring home a box, you will eventually eat the entire box (and you will probably only really enjoy one or two of them).¹¹

Indulge during the day. When your body is most active, it deals with fat and sugar and large portions better than in the morning or at night. Try dessert after lunch rather than after dinner. For the same reason, it's more favorable to indulge a little after you exercise than it is to indulge first and try to work it off later.

No food is inherently good or bad. There are many levels in between, and most foods have both good things and bad things about them. This is why you often find conflicting reports in magazine and newspaper articles regarding "controversial" foods like eggs, coffee, and red meat. An apple a day keeps the doctor away, but a dozen of them will probably leave you puking or otherwise on the toilet for longer than you'd like.

You can eat anything you want as long as you keep it under control. Maybe the time between slices of triple chocolate fudge cake should be much longer than the time between the occasional chocolate chip cookie. Maybe when you decide to have a big fat juicy bacon bleu cheese burger with extra dressing for the fries, you balance it out with a really smart dinner later that night. Maybe if you go on vacation for a week and decide to throw it all to the wind, you just eat a little smarter for a week once you get home so that your body can even out. Use some common sense to weigh your indulgences and find a balance.

Your cravings for foods you probably shouldn't have are temporary. They will never go away completely, but they should decrease as you get used to the suggestions in this book and your body gets use to getting what it needs. For now, find your balance and be patient with yourself.

¹¹ *This, by the way, is why you should never go grocery shopping when you're hungry – you'll buy large amounts of questionable food because your body needs energy and knows that fat and sugar are loaded with it. You'll bring this stuff home, and you'll eat it just because it was there.*

