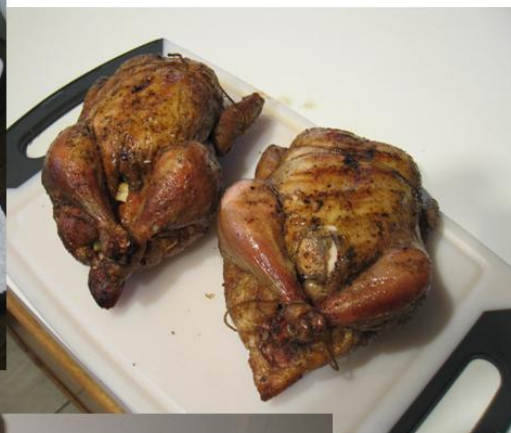


Paleo Diet Guide

Preview



By Adam Farrah

Thank you...

These pages you've just downloaded are the Introduction to my upcoming Paleo Diet Resource along with the complete Chapter 7. I do have a title for the book but, the internet being what it is, I'm keeping that under wraps until I release the finished work in January of 2011.

I've found it hugely gratifying to interact with all of my friends on Facebook, through [my blog](#) and everywhere else. The [Strong is the New Skinny](#) community and the other great communities I'm blessed to be a part of have played an absolutely pivotal role in the completion of this project and in making it – in my humble opinion – unique, timely and highly practical and relevant.

Without all the great questions, comments, support AND criticism I've received from all of you, I would not have been as confident that I was creating something of VALUE for my friends and the community. **It's my sincere hope that this free selection from my guide is useful, entertaining and helpful to you in reaching your goals and understanding diet and health more completely.** Yes, I'd love for you to buy my book when it's released but – more importantly – my goal as I worked on this pre-release composition was that it would stand alone as something that helps you and that it *just might* repay you for some of your help, support and stimulating discussion as I've worked on the project. I've been truly humbled by the great people I've met and talked to and I hope my work lives up to your expectations.

What you have here is the book's introduction and a chapter on meal timing, frequency and cortisol. The meal timing and frequency chapter is the one many of you said you'd be most interested in so that's the one I wanted to release as a free preview. I consider these pages to be MOSTLY finished and don't expect them to change a lot when they appear in the completed project next month. Obviously, I value and appreciate any feedback I get, so feel free to let me know how I might be able to improve the information I've put out here. You can reach me through my website practicalpaleolithic.com.

Obviously, what you're about to read are MY opinions based on MY experience. Use your own good judgment and consult a qualified healthcare provider before implementing any of the ideas here. They're provided for information only and not meant to diagnose, prescribe or cure any health situation you might find yourself in.

Thank you for using some of your limited time and energy to look at my work and consider my ideas. I know there's more information, opinion and discussion out there than anyone could pay attention to in several lifetimes and it means more than I can explain that you'd take some time to pay attention to mine.

Here's to a GREAT 2011 with ALL of us reaching our goals!

Adam Farrah

“Adapt what is useful, reject what is useless, and add what is specifically your own.”

— Bruce Lee

Introduction – Another Paleo Diet Book?

Yeah, another Paleo Diet book. This one is *different*, though. Virtually every diet book out there – Paleo or otherwise – tells you what to do and what to eat and leaves it at that. In many cases, there’s also a lot of theory and a lot defense.

Here’s the thing – EVERYONE needs a diet that’s tuned to their own unique biology, needs, tastes, lifestyle, training and a million other variables. YES, there are some GREAT “maps” or “blueprints” like Paleo that can get us 80-90% of the way there. But, ultimately, the last 10-20% is where the REAL MAGIC happens.

I’ve designed this book specifically to complement the other great diet resources that have been written. There is an extensive list of them at the end of this book and I talk about some of the major works and people throughout the book. There is absolutely no shortage of theory, great books and authors who have more credentials and experience than I do. My purpose here is to create a UNIQUE RESOURCE that bridges the gap between theory and practice.

“How do we best IMPLEMENT?” is the question I address over and over...

What *are* my credentials?

I have two credentials that are relevant to this discussion and my writing of this book. I have a Bachelors of Science Degree in Chemistry from the University of Connecticut. Because of the education I got at UConn, I was able to approach this entire body of knowledge – diet, health and nutrition – with a scientific attitude and a skeptical, researcher’s mindset. I also was actually able to understand what the hell many authors and theorists were talking about when they got techie. And, incidentally, I was able to tell when a few authors got all technical and DIDN’T know what they were talking about.

Along these same lines, the other important credential I have is over 6 years of experience working with my own diet and health every single day. I essentially used my body as a laboratory in my own quest for health. During that time I not only learned what was appropriate for me, I observed the larger patterns and methods I was using to create a healthy diet for myself. This book is largely about how to develop a healthy diet for YOU using the methods I used. Your diet won’t look the same as mine, but the methods you use to arrive at an ideal diet will be the same I used and that I detail in this book.

I contend – as a scientist – that the entire body of diet, health and nutrition knowledge is sorely lacking in understanding and direction in the practical implementation for the individual. There is some great science – formal and empirical observation – when it comes to the field, but there is virtually no effort to individualize. This book is my effort to explain how an individual’s diet can vary and how to arrive at a sensible implementation of sound diet and nutrition principles *for you*.

Across the board recommendations don't work

Yes, there are principals you can – and should – follow and there are foods you should and shouldn't eat. I've found, however, that the details of a diet are highly individualized and need to be determined over time. As I promised above, I'll show you how to do that.

The Two Major Problems with Dogma and Theory

- 1) It's easy for just about anyone to have an intellectual idea of what to eat. The real results – and the art – happen when you make the diet part of you and it becomes a habit and a part of your everyday life. Lists of what to eat are great. Theory and biochemistry is great. **But HOW do we implement a diet and make it work in our lives on a practical level?** This book will show you how.
- 2) Something that's been particularly painful and frustrating to me personally are broad, across-the-board diet recommendations. **It is pretty much IMPOSSIBLE for anyone to tell YOU how YOU should eat.** Believe it. Only you can determine – through experimentation – exactly what you should be eating.

Dogma seems to go with every diet that establishes a community around it. A lot of this is just human nature – we all want certainty and having lots of rules and belief structures can give us that. Maybe I'm just a big rule-breaker, but I think theory and structure can only go so far when it comes to diet.

There is A LOT of variation that can be accommodated within a "Paleo" diet structure and the diet – and the individual – will be MUCH better for it. Now, this IS NOT some kind of call for a "moderate" or "balanced" approach. "Everything in moderation" is the road to mediocrity, average health and average performance. We want better than that. We want to be outstanding. Being outstanding means that a template probably isn't going to work though. Being outstanding requires more precision and accuracy.

What this Book Will Accomplish

I set out to write a book that was different. To my knowledge, no one has ever written a book quite like this one. That's a major statement and here's why I make it: I've experimented intensely with diet and read everything I could find on the topic for over 6 years. I HAD to, because my health, training and quality of life depended on it. **What I found over and over again is that SOME of virtually every major diet theory I tried worked. Some. Never all.**

The more I worked, the more I learned that there were elements of a TRULY healthy diet – and a lot of diets and diet theories had at least a few of them – but NO diet included every single one of them.

Further, NO diet ever worked for me "straight up" without modification.

After a long, LONG process of trial and error – the better part of 6 years – I arrived at a diet that worked FOR ME and a pretty good understanding of my body and my health. Incidentally, I gained a fantastic understanding of myself as an *individual person* as well, but that's another book...

At this point, I had a choice. I could create MY OWN diet theory, lay out everything I do that works FOR ME, create a big, defensible theory around it and claim I had the One True Path or I could do something else.

I chose to do something else.

Maybe it was my education as a scientist that helped me along, but I came to realize that there are principles of a healthy diet that are universal to everyone. In fact, anyone with a little time, patience and intelligence can get their hands on those. The issue isn't so much knowing *what* to do, the issue is knowing which principles and which techniques to apply – at which times and in what ways – so that they *work* and create the health and results we're looking for.

I believe the major problems you'll have in understanding diet, health and nutrition are these:

- 1) Not knowing what solid, foundational principles should be incorporated into an individual diet – and I already said those are pretty easy to learn with some research and critical thinking.
- 2) Understanding *how* to incorporate the *appropriate* principles into a diet and create an individualized diet and lifestyle that works FOR YOU. This is a major issue. Even if you have all the tools and techniques, it's the application that creates the results and the application requires a scientific, systematic and, at times, even an artful approach.
- 3) Virtually every diet book in existence lays out HARD and DOGMATIC theories that are supposed to universally apply to everyone – without modification or individualization. **Thus, virtually every diet book sets up a situation where an individual is guaranteed to get mixed results and have limited success.**

A Different Path

I'm taking a different approach. Rather than tell you I know what you should do, I tell you how to figure out for yourself what you should do. Everyone's diet is going to look slightly different and I'm going to tell you how to figure out your own personalized diet and make it work.

How this Book is Organized

Creating this book was a major effort and I struggled with the best ways to organize the information. In the end, this is what I came up with:

The Basics, what to do and why – I give a limited introduction to the why and really skip right to the “what to do” part. There's no shortage of theory and justification in the diet and nutrition world and it wasn't my point to add to it or put my own spin on things. That doesn't really get YOU results. I've listed an extensive selection of great resources at the end of this guide so you can do your own detective work if you like. I also assume that most people reading this guide also are pretty well sold on a Paleo or Paleo-like approach.

Tuning and Individualization – This is where I get into the very messy and individual details of creating a diet and nutrition program that works for you. I get into the bulk of what I've learned here and show you how to create a diet that works for you by making modifications to the baseline diet that was created and implemented in the sections before.

Advanced Topics – Here I go even deeper and show you how to get the last few percent and really tune the diet to your individual situation. Virtually everyone is going to work with these topics and implement them in a different way.

The End Result

In the end, I doubt any two diets created from the recommendations and the process in this book are going to look the same. The foundational elements will look alike and the basic diets might be similar, but the application and details will likely be vastly different. And, this is the point. We're all unique – with unique bodies, strengths and limitations, life situations and on and on. **A successful diet is going to incorporate a number of unchanging, foundational principles and then be completely individualized and tuned to the individual in the implementation.**

Here we go!

Chapter 7 – Meal Timing and Frequency

When to Eat – Part 1

I talk about when to eat in two parts. This first part addresses some of the basics of when to eat and helps you work out a baseline feeding schedule for yourself. In Part 2, I go deeper into individualizing this aspect of your diet and making more detailed adjustments.

Back in my bodybuilding days, I did the whole “six meals a day” thing. I mean, any less and I might catabolize my muscles for protein, right? I can vividly remember getting pretty freaked out if I got even A LITTLE hungry! And I had protein bars stashed EVERYWHERE. Fast forward to the 21st Century and I now know a lot of this stuff was supplement company propaganda.

It’s only a relatively modern notion that we need to eat “regularly” and have a “breakfast, lunch and dinner.” I can’t remember where I heard this originally, but I can recall an author I was reading once showing some evidence that the whole “big breakfast” and “evening meal” concept was actually more of an advantage to the owners of fields and factories who employed workers than it was any kind of healthy practice. If you think about it, eating BEFORE work and AFTER work has some pretty good advantages when you’re employing (or enslaving) a lot of labor. Better to have them eating as much off the clock as possible, right?

Meal Timing and Cortisol

Meal timing is a pretty individual thing. Personally, I tend not to be hungry in the morning and find about half the people I talk to fall into this camp. The other half are usually hungry in the morning and want at least SOMETHING pretty soon after waking up.

In the “eat soon after waking up” group, there are two additional distinctions. There are those who want something heavy in the morning and those who want something quick, light and easy to digest.

I’m going to get into a little science (Very little!) and then circle back around to talk about meal timing. Understanding how cortisol works in the body is essential to getting a handle on meal timing and a lot of other concepts we talk about in this guide.

Cortisol

I debated about whether or not to even explain how the cortisol thing works and get into hormones and stuff in detail. I finally decided that you did need this information to make good decisions about eating, training, lifestyle, etc. so I’m including just enough chemistry to help you make those decisions. I’m sure I’ll get some emails from angry biochemists who will tell me how simplistically or incompletely I covered the topic, but I really don’t care about them. I care about giving you enough basic information to make decisions, understand what’s going on in your body and get on with your life. If you want to dig into this topic in detail you can use google and the resources at the end of this book.

Here's what you need to know about cortisol:

- Cortisol is a catabolic hormone that your body uses to wake you up, make you alert and focused, control inflammation and mobilize nutrients like sugar and fat *into* the bloodstream for use as fuel.
- Cortisol and adrenaline have related and similar actions in the body.
- Cortisol generally peaks in the morning. Rising cortisol is actually the main thing that wakes you up in the morning.
- Your [Circadian Rhythm](#) is intimately related to daylight/darkness and, essentially, cortisol. This is why you get tired at night when it's dark and wake up in the morning with the light. (There's a lot I can go into here about when your sleep/wake cycle DOESN'T follow daytime/nighttime but I'll leave that for now.)
- Cortisol is also secreted by the body during intense exercise.
- Cortisol can have negative impact on the body – especially when chronically elevated. Examples of negative impact are things like: elevated blood sugar and poor insulin sensitivity (this essentially looks like Type II Diabetes to a lab test), irritability and anxiety, depression, poor digestion and inability to gain muscle.
- Hormones like insulin, testosterone and estrogen are – in very simplistic terms – “antagonistic” to cortisol. This means that when cortisol and adrenaline are active and elevated the “anabolic” hormones like insulin, testosterone and estrogen are lowered or not received by the cells. This is why you're not hungry or tired when you're in a really stressful situation and it's also why a stressful lifestyle will completely wreck your training progress and ruin your health.
- Caffeine ELEVATES cortisol.

As a chemist, I'm completely dissatisfied with the above bullet points about a VERY complex body system. But, again, I'm giving you what YOU need to implement and move on as opposed to writing a doctoral dissertation and trying to prove how smart I am.

Why Cortisol Matters

Obviously, we need cortisol to live. It only has a negative impact when it's chronically elevated or elevated at the wrong times. For example, if you're wired at night when you need to sleep and then exhausted when you wake up in the morning and can't get moving until noon, you're basically dealing with cortisol release that's ill-timed in the body. Other things like Type II Diabetes and anxiety disorders have also been linked to chronically elevated cortisol.

Also, chronically elevated cortisol – from too much training, stress, too much caffeine or some combination of all three – creates a state of Adrenal Fatigue in the body. When the adrenal glands are fatigued, the body starts having problems controlling inflammation, regulating energy, controlling blood sugar and a bunch of other not-good things. In the coming years we're going to hear a lot more about Adrenal Fatigue as it becomes more common due to higher stress levels and modern lifestyles.

What we need to do to get this meal timing thing right is work WITH our body, our Circadian Rhythm and our hormonal waves.

The Three Basic Morning Strategies

Fasting in the morning

My default strategy is to fast in the morning. I usually just extend my morning fast until about noon or after. Robb Wolf and Ori Hoffmekler have discussed this approach as have other authors from the “fasting world.” My personal approach is to wake up at about 7am – and I’m NEVER hungry when I wake up – have some organic coffee, write, work out and do more “energetic” things and then eat my first meal when my activity has calmed down a bit.

This offers several advantages:

- Coffee/caffeine negatively impacts digestion so whatever you eat in the morning isn’t going to be as well digested as it could be when you have a body full of caffeine.
- Coffee/caffeine raises cortisol and, in addition to interrupting digestion, cortisol blunts insulin sensitivity so your meal will raise blood sugar but your cells will be less receptive to the nutrients in your bloodstream while blood cortisol is elevated.
- Everything I said above about coffee/caffeine pretty much goes even WITHOUT a morning caffeine fix – if your hormonal system is even moderately healthy you should have your highest cortisol levels in the morning anyway. This means that, even without morning caffeine, your digestion and insulin sensitivity won’t likely be as good as it will be in a few hours when the morning cortisol spike has gone down a bit.

If you’re in the “fast in the morning” group, you might want to drop the caffeine for a few weeks and see if you STILL want to fast in the morning. I’ve found that I might eat an hour or so earlier in the morning without the coffee but I’m still basically not interested in food and the morning. I’ve been that way for most of my life.

Eating Lightly in the morning

If you ARE hungry in the morning, more power to you. Do realize that, if your hormonal system is running optimally, your cortisol levels will be elevated in the morning so your digestion won’t necessarily be optimal. This is one reason many people eat lightly in the morning instinctively.

This is all about finding what works FOR YOU, so you might want to try some different eating strategies in the morning. One week you could try waiting a few hours after waking up to eat, the next you could try a light meal and the next week you could try a larger meal higher in fat and protein. It’s all about experimenting and seeing what works best for you. And, what works best can very well change over time as your life and body change. In any case, keeping a food/training journal is the best way to keep this stuff straight and have the data you need to sort this stuff out. I tell you how to do this in the chapter “Keeping a Food and Training Journal.”

Yogurt in the Morning

If you talk to enough people, you’ll eventually run into some who like to eat some kind of yogurt or yogurt-based food in the morning as their first meal. I first learned this approach from Jordan Rubin, author of “The Maker’s Diet” and “Restoring Your Digestive Health.” Rubin’s approach uses goat yogurt

as opposed to cow's milk yogurt. (I cover dairy – including goat yogurt – in great detail in the “Dairy” chapter later in the book.)

There are two major advantages to eating yogurt first thing in the morning if you find you need something early to be at your best. (And BOTH of these points are presupposing that you TOLERATE whatever yogurt product you might use well. I explain how to know for sure in the later chapter “Food Allergies and Intolerance”)

The two advantages to eating yogurt in the morning:

- 1) Yogurt on an empty stomach could help to load your gut with friendly bacteria, also known as “probiotics.”
- 2) Yogurt is a “predigested food” (it's pre-digested by the probiotics – that's what they eat) and is considered easier to digest. This is an advantage since we're assuming digestion could be compromised in the morning due to elevated cortisol.

Again, I'm assuming that yogurt is an appropriate food FOR YOU. Yogurt can be a good strategy to experiment if dairy is OK for you. Check out the “Dairy” chapter for the details.

Eating More Heavily in the Morning

If you really, truly want a big breakfast in the morning – and digest it well and feel good with it – go ahead and do that. You probably won't want to eat a big breakfast and go train though.

Some of you might also find that on non-training days you're more likely to eat in the morning. This is particularly true if you train in the morning on workout days. There's absolutely nothing wrong with eating a good breakfast on non-training days and fasting on training days when you train in the morning.

Eating early on non-training days can boost recovery since you're likely to get more calories on these days as well. As far as eating a big breakfast and going to train, I can't imagine that would be a good strategy. If you want to try it, make sure and keep a close eye on your performance. But, like I've said, digestion and training are pretty much opposite processes and trying to do them both at the same time is pretty surely sub-optimal.

Eating During the Rest of the Day

With the breakfast thing out of the way, the rest of the day gets easier. The only kink is timing your meals in relation to your workouts and that's the subject of the next section.

I don't worry about eating every few hours like I used to. I eat when I'm hungry and don't worry if I'm hungry for a bit before I get to eat. I tend to take a pretty lax approach to frequency and eat only when I'm hungry as well. About the only time I “monitor” meal frequency is when I know it's getting late and I want to get a meal in before bed. As an example, if my last meal was at 3 or 4pm and it's getting near 8pm – with a 10pm expected bedtime – I know I need to eat by 8pm or so to give myself time to digest a bit before bed.

For the most part, a quality protein, fat and vegetable meal should keep you satiated for 3-4 hours. There is a HUGE individuality component to this, though.

Eating 2-3 Meals per Day

Personally, I do two to three meals per day. It's pretty impractical to do more since I usually fast in the morning and eat my first meal between noon and 1pm. This first meal of the day is usually my post workout meal. So, there's an early morning wake up, coffee, training and higher activity and no food. From there, it's usually one to two high protein and fat meals with declining mental and physical activity as the day progresses. My last meal of the day is usually after dark and I follow that with STRICT no computer time (usually), light fiction reading and bed.

Eating More Often During the Day

Many people prefer to eat more often during the day. This is perfectly fine and is probably necessary if you're not fasting in the morning or are waking up very early, fasting, training and eating earlier in the day.

The one caveat to eating frequently during the day is to make sure you're eating GOOD food. If you eat six times a day and three or four of those "meals" are snacks like bars, shakes or roasted nuts, I'd argue that you're getting very little true value from those foods and you're basically getting the bulk of your nutrition from your (hopefully high quality and Paleo) solid food meals. In fact, we could take this a step further and argue that eating processed stuff like bars and shakes actually puts MORE demand on your body as opposed to feeding and nourishing it.

So, yeah, eat as much as you want during the day, but make sure it's high quality Paleo foods like I talk about in this guide as opposed to "Paleo" or "semi-Paleo" convenience foods that aren't very nutritious.

Meal Timing and Training - Part 1



Working out and timing your meal for training is a BIG topic. Exercise releases cortisol and I explained the effects of cortisol on your body above. Elevated cortisol combined with eating too close to training time is a big reason there's a Pukie wall in CrossFit gyms.

In the advanced section, "When to Eat – Part 2," I talk at length about figuring out OPTIMAL meal timing relative to workouts.

For now, just keep a few things in mind:

- Give yourself AT LEAST 1 hour to digest your food before a workout. Some will want even more time and this can be a very individual thing. MANY people I've talked to who train in the morning prefer to do this fasted from the night before. (with maybe some caffeine). This is how I've done it for virtually my entire life.

- Of the people I've talked to who eat AND train in the morning, virtually all of them eat something very light and easy to digest.
- Many people will be VERY hungry AFTER a workout and many others will not be hungry at all. Still others will sometimes be hungry and other times not after training. This also relates to cortisol and some other factors and I cover how to deal with it in detail later.
- Many will need to eat only very specific foods before a workout to optimize energy levels. If you're working out later in the day, you obviously won't be able to fast and you'll want to play with your pre-workout meal timing and pre-workout meals to optimize them.

For now, here's what you need to know about timing your meals around your training: **When cortisol is elevated – in the morning, after coffee/caffeine and during and immediately after intense training, digestion and storage hormones (things like insulin) are going to be low or not as effective.** This means you'll want to minimize or eliminate digestive load on the body at these times.

There are some people who can eat very near the start of a workout – and tend to do better this way – but they tend to be a select few with very strong digestion. The rule is: If you're training, cortisol is elevated and digestion IS compromised. Some can get away with training on a stomach full of food because they have digestive strength and capacity to spare when the cortisol kicks on. Most of the people I've talked to can't do this.

Type of Training

Something else I've noticed is that people who do highly intense training – like CrossFit – tend to need to train fasted. Usually, when I raise the question of eating before training, the people who do less intense training or train at a slower pace are better able to eat nearer to a workout.

Another group that tends to eat closer to – or even during – training are longer duration endurance types. Here, meal timing and composition are a major deal and there's usually a need for some kind of pre-workout fueling.

Endurance athletics is not my thing at all so I'll refer you to some of the resources I have in the back for more info. I do have some during-endurance-activity fueling suggestions later in the book though, since I'm aware of a few good strategies.

Training in the Morning

For myself and many others, training in the morning on an empty stomach is not only the most comfortable and productive way to train, it's also a really good way to completely circumvent this whole "When do I eat in relation to training?" thing.

There are a bunch of advantages to training in the morning and doing it on an empty stomach:

- Cortisol levels are already naturally elevated in the morning. Not eating maintains that elevation and training increases it further. Your hormonal system is already going in the "cortisol direction" and it makes sense to keep it going on that track.

- Fat burning is likely enhanced by training first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. It's pretty rare that I'll quote anything that you might find in a mainstream health and fitness magazine, but it's been pretty well established FOREVER that fat burning is enhanced when you do cardio first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. Recently, this fat burning effect has been extended to virtually all shorter duration training activity.
- Eating and digestion move your hormonal system in the OPPOSITE direction to cortisol and adrenaline. In this case, you're asking your body to do two opposite processes. The exercise is demanding that your body raise cortisol and move blood AWAY from the intestines and TOWARD the limbs to support activity and the food in your stomach is trying to move the blood INTO the intestines so digestion can take place. Insulin sensitivity and a bunch of other processes also move in opposite directions in this situation.
- Training later in the day can mess up your sleep cycle and Circadian Rhythm. Many people who train in the late afternoon (as in, after work) find they can't fall asleep at night and/or have poor sleep quality. This is mainly due to the fact that cortisol is declining in the late afternoon and training elevates it again. This is forcing the body to provide TWO cortisol peaks during the day as opposed to one and the elevated cortisol late in the day is going to inhibit optimal release of "evening hormones" like melatonin, growth hormone and testosterone.

So, when do you eat in relation to a workout?

The most basic rule I'll give you regarding eating before training is to err on the side of being hungry before you train as opposed to being fed. If you can train in the morning you'll definitely want to train fasted if you can and it might actually be worth *developing* the ability to train fasted if you work out in the morning. It might also be worth rearranging your schedule, if possible, to allow you to train in the morning if you can – more on this later...

What if you can't train in the morning?

If you absolutely, positively can't train in the morning you'll have to make do with what you've got. In this case, you'll want to mainly experiment with when you eat in relation to training. Work on continually backing your last meal before a workout off from your training time. Try one hour, two hours, three hours, etc. and see how you feel best. You'll need to experiment with the timing AND the meal composition. Once you have these down, you can work with caffeine timing if you use caffeine before training. I outline a systematic process for all of this in "How Much to Eat –Part 2."

What if night is your morning?

I've talked to plenty of people – particularly LEOs – who have a non-standard schedule. Robb Wolf and James "OPT" Fitzgerald have both said the best strategy here is to get a different schedule. Barring that ideal option, the next best solution is to have a *consistent* schedule even if it's antagonistic to a "natural" day/night cycle.

In either case, the best option is to train when you wake up on an empty stomach. If you wake up at 7pm for a midnight shift, train at 8pm or whatever, eat and go about your day. The point is that your peak wakeful time is likely your peak cortisol time and you want to train in that peak and not try to peak cortisol AGAIN for a training session.

How Much to Eat – Part 1

In general, Paleo is going to ignore any kind of calorie counting or weighing of food. You'll eat when you're hungry and stop eating when you're full. This is a major advantage Paleo has over other diets. The main reason we can be so lax with calorie counting on Paleo is because Paleo foods tend to allow the body to NATURALLY regulate hunger, satiety and portion size.

In "How Much to Eat – Part 2" I talk about the two situations where you'll want to at least know where you are in terms of calorie intake. These are when your goals are either fat loss or weight gain. If your goal is reaching your own natural and optimal body composition, I think eating Paleo foods in accordance with your body's own signals and desires can get you pretty close. In the case of fat loss, carefully controlling carbohydrate intake can help speed things along. Regarding muscle gain, higher carbs and protein are going to be key as are certain types of fats. I'll cover the details you need for both of these situations later in the book.

Setting a Baseline

For Part 1, I'm just looking to get you close enough to get started. In fact, to get started you can pretty much just focus on eating Paleo foods and forget calories and nutrient amounts until Part 2 and the more detailed stuff we get into later. **Eliminating grains and dairy and going after predominantly whole foods from quality sources is enough of a challenge, an excellent goal and a great accomplishment.** I'd prefer not to distract you with weighing and measuring. For the most part, you can avoid weighing and measuring entirely unless you have specific goals that need a little more precision and accuracy.

If you REALLY feel like you need a guideline to get started, here it is. Unless you're carrying a lot of muscle or a lot of fat, you'll probably do fine with eating 1 gram of *quality* protein per pound of body weight. If you have more than around 10 pounds of fat to lose or are carrying a significant amount of muscle you'd do well to have an idea of your lean mass and then do 1 gram of protein per pound of LEAN bodyweight.

I get into all this stuff in detail in "How Much to Eat, Part 2" and the chapter "The Math You'll Need." For now, you can get a good start by eating 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight, the same number (roughly) of grams of carbohydrates – from PALEO sources – and about half that number of grams of fat.

Incidentally, if you choose to even do this rough calculation at all, you really only need to do it once and then keep your eye on your meals for a few days. I've found that we tend to eat similar foods and portions out of habit for the most part and if you're in the ballpark for a few days that's probably where you're going to remain.

Again, you don't really need to do this at all to get started in most cases. This is one of the great advantages to Paleo – once you lose the processed carbs a lot of things fall into place.

Processed Carbs Bypass Your Natural Satiety Mechanisms

For me, I can REALLY overeat on carbs – particularly processed ones – but find it nearly impossible to eat too much protein or fat. The body naturally tends to stop eating meat and veggies when it's not hungry anymore but tends to just want more and more candy or high carb junk if you give in and start eating it

in the first place. About the only Paleo thing I find I can eat a lot of despite being full is bacon and even that will become hard to do after a certain point.

I won't go into all the chemistry here, but high glycemic carbs tend to really stimulate appetite. There's also a ton of crazy stuff that the processed food industry does to make you want to eat more and more of their food. The bottom line is whole, unprocessed REAL food is going to make it a lot easier for your body to regulate how much to eat and when to push away from the table.

Eating Paleo foods will make it very practical to just eat when you're hungry and stop eating when you're not.

What if you're NOT hungry?

Being seriously not hungry can indicate a few problems – particularly if you're training hard. The main thing here is your cortisol could be really elevated from training and/or other stress.

How is your performance?

The main indicator for what's going on with your body is performance. If you're getting stronger and faster you can assume you're generally heading in the right direction. If your times and lifts aren't improving, you're lacking desire and motivation to train consistently or you just feel tired and not hungry a lot, it's a good bet you're overtraining and/or over-stressed and you need to get that handled before you'll make good progress and get your health on track. Check out the chapter "The HIDDEN Aspects of Paleo Success, Part 1 – Lifestyle" later on to see what you can do to start addressing all this.

Caffeine

Caffeine has a major effect on appetite because it elevates cortisol. If you find yourself frequently not hungry take a look at your caffeine intake. If you're drinking coffee or other caffeinated stuff throughout the day, that will significantly decrease your appetite. My strategy is to have my caffeine fix early in the morning and have no more caffeine for the rest of the day. Better yet, you can try eliminating ALL caffeine and see how your appetite does. Not everyone can do the zero caffeine thing for very long but, if you try it, take note of the difference in your appetite. You'll very likely find that it increases.

Sleep

If you're not sleeping enough, you'll likely have a less than optimal appetite. At least, less than optimal for the right foods. I usually find that my desire for sugar and processed carbs goes way up when my sleep gets messed up. If you're consistently not hungry for the right foods you'll want to take a good look at your sleep quantity and quality and implement some of the strategies from "The HIDDEN Aspects of Paleo Success, Part 1 – Lifestyle" chapter later on.

Overtraining

As I mentioned above, overtraining is yet another issue that can set you up for a decreased appetite. If you're engaging in high intensity, CrossFit-type training with a high frequency you'll want to look at your workload and other life stress and see if a short layoff or decrease in intensity is called for. I discuss training periodization in detail later on.

What do ALL these have in common?

If you said cortisol, you're right. Poor performance, caffeine use, poor sleep, stress and an overtrained state ALL indicate elevated cortisol. Cortisol is not something you want chronically elevated and one of the most important advantages of a Paleo diet and lifestyle is the positive regulation and normalization of this hormone and many others.

What if you're ALWAYS hungry?

This isn't necessarily a bad thing. It could possibly be an indication that you're not eating enough or eating the wrong foods. But, if you're eating good, solid Paleo foods like I recommend in this guide – and eating enough of them – being hungry is likely a sign your body is processing food fine and responding to training.

How is your performance?

Again, take a look at your performance. If your numbers are moving in a positive direction and you're generally excited about training when you get to the gym, it's probably fine that you're hungry more often than not and you might want to increase your calories. I'll explain how to do this systematically later on.

But, take a look at digestion

Something else to consider if you're eating a Paleo diet, eating what should be enough and are STILL really hungry more often than not is whether you have a problem with digestion. I get into digestion in detail in its own chapter later on, so I won't go into detail here.

What now?

So, the basics from this chapter are going to be:

- Train in the morning if at all possible
- Experiment with training fasted from the night before if you train in the morning
- If you CAN'T train in the morning, start working on your own optimal pre-workout meal timing
- Eat Paleo foods and listen to your body when it wants to eat and when it doesn't
- Keep a food journal
- Cortisol is a big deal and a lot of stuff that you do can elevate it