

The 8 Secrets of Lowcarb Success

This could be your lucky day! I'm gonna tell you ALL the secrets to achieving weight loss all the way to goal with lowcarb. Except they aren't secrets at all! The problem is that most everybody thinks these secrets only apply to other people. The real secret is to believe that most, if not all, of these secrets apply to YOU.

1. Lead With The Diet—which means **ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN**. Before you go to bed each night, know exactly what you are going to eat (and have it purchased and as ready to go as possible) the next day. With a plan, you engineer your own success, you fix it so that bad food choices are NEVER an option. Neither is "at least" eating. As in "at least I ate a carton of lowcarb ice cream instead going on a full blown binge." At least eating gives "at least" results. Leading with a plan is also what helps you to begin separating your emotions from your food decisions.

When planning your daily food, base the plan on a few important guidelines in addition to the general guidelines of lowcarb. First, find your basal metabolic calorie needs (you can do that at www.fitday.com) and eat no more than 250 calories per day above that rate. (That rate will need to be adjusted slightly downward for every ten pounds you lose.) Basically you plan your diet by keeping the protein to no more grams than the number of pounds of your ideal body weight, you keep the carbs in the range that keeps you losing steadily---for most people that's somewhere between 40-60 net carbs. Fill in the rest of your calories with GOOD fats (those should generally fall into the range of 55-75% of daily calories).

2. Control Your Physical Hunger. Never let yourself go more than 5-6 waking hours without eating at least a couple hundred calories that include some protein, fat and veggies, even if you are not hungry. This is the secret to keeping ourselves physically on an even keel. And THAT provides a much firmer base for handling our emotions which are not nearly as predictable or controllable as hunger.

Because for those of us for whom "emotional eating" is an issue, hunger + emotional challenges, surprises, or triggers = binge. Hence this secret to simply control what you CAN control—your hunger 24/7/365. Keep your furnace evenly stoked with pure foods, and THEN you will be in a much stronger position to slowly change how you deal with your emotions and everything/everyone else in your life more appropriately than you have been (by using food as an emotional coping tool as well as the means to physical satiety).

So many people go into this with the mistaken idea that they just need to control their feelings. I sure did! If you were an emotional eater, you will eventually need to find different ways to react to your feelings. But that is much easier to do when

you change what you eat. So the true secret to lowcarb success is in some senses a riddle...the secret is changing almost everything about you except what you eat...but you have to DO that by changing what you eat, which will eventually help change WHY you eat. You lead with the diet.

3. Get as Many of Your Daily Allowed Carbs as You Possibly Can from Lowcarb Vegetables—and in the later stages some fruits if you find those work for you. (They do not work for many, especially those prone to yeast difficulties.) Probably the most overlooked "rule" of Atkins requires that at least 50% of the daily induction carbs are to come from veggies, that no more than 4 carbs should come from cream or cheese. That leaves only 6 "leftover" carbs to spare on things like the carbs in things like powdered artificial sweeteners (1 per packet), additives in processed meats (like bacon, pepperoni and sausage), convenience foods, and beverages like tea and coffee. Additional carbs added in the OWL phase are also to come almost exclusively from veggies.

My observation over more than 10 years of participating on online lowcarb lists is that absolutely every single time, the higher the percentage of these "good" carbs, and the lower the percentage of the "bad" ones, the surer the success. Some especially problematic foods that can wreak havoc in SOME lowcarbers come in the form of milk products, grains, nuts, fruits, artificial sweeteners, alcohol, and legumes (soy) and trace carbs in food additives that are in things like processed meats or even pre-marinated fresh meats, as well as certain natural lowcarb foods that promote yeast overgrowth. If you are following your plan, doing everything right, keeping the calories and ratios where they should be, and don't lose, or you stop losing for more than 6-8 weeks, it's likely time for a change. That change is to remove ALL of those problem carbs and build your diet without them. I call that a Gold Standard lowcarb diet and if you e-mail me I will share the details of that with you after we discuss the steps you have taken to determine if it's really the step you need to take at this time. When all else seems to fail, Gold Standard lowcarb, done within the correct calories and food percentage framework, almost never fails.

4. Do Not Eat Lowcarb Products (breads, bagels, tortilla wraps, candies, ice creams, etc.) Instead, find new ways to prepare single ingredient, natural, whole foods. If you eat products, DO NOT deduct the "carbs" from sugar alcohols or glycerine no matter what the label indicates. And remember, if it never had a face, it has SOME carbs, no matter what the label says. Labeling laws allow 0.5 carbs or less per serving to be rounded off to zero. So zero doesn't always mean zero on food labels, especially if you eat multiple servings!

Calculating the "true carb count" of products will immediately throw your balance of carbs from veggies totally askew---that's ONE of the reasons why attempting to incorporate these products into day-to-day lowcarb eating rarely works. It is the same reason why incorporating alcoholic beverages into a lowcarb plan so often causes problems. Alcohol and sugar alcohols (found in most lowcarb

products) fall into a fuzzy food category—foods that supply calories which are neither carbohydrate, fat, nor protein. The way these foods are labeled is governed by law, but the way they behave in our bodies is not. In MOST human bodies, those calories BEHAVE like "bad" carbohydrates.

5. Make Sure That Most, If Not All, of Your Fats Are GOOD Fats—that is, the fats from UNPROCESSED meats, butter, and cold pressed olive and/or nut oils. Bad fats (trans fats) are found almost exclusively in processed foods and products.

6. Do Not Stay on Induction past 2 Weeks. Increase your veggie carbs after induction, and keep your carbs from cheese and other dairy products to less than 4 per day, just as the rules of induction require. (Under 2 is usually works even better.) Veggie carbs speed losses, junk carbs impede them. *[Sidenote: Be careful adding nuts. They seem to be the most "your mileage may vary" food among otherwise successful lowcarbers. True nuts (but not legumes like soy and peanuts) are an extremely healthy lowcarb alternative for some people, but for others they start causing problems almost immediately. If you try them and find that you are simply incapable of limiting your portions to less than 1/4 cup eaten no more than 3 times per week, you would be best advised to leave them for later, postponing the re-testing of your ability to handle them until after you get to goal.]*

7. Exercise 60 Minutes at Least 4 Times per Week. Learn about both kinds of exercise, aerobic and strength training. If you feel you must ease into exercising, begin with the strength training because if you're going to only do one, that is by far the most important, and because it will give you the most bang for your buck in terms of INCH-loss. Get over the notion that you will bulk up with hard strength training---you would need (illegal) drugs to do that, and nobody's suggesting you to go there! I've been strength training hard for almost 5 years, do I look like an over-muscled body builder?

8. Be Extremely Selective When Deciding from Whom You Take Online Lowcarb Advice. Listen much more carefully to the advice of people who are at goal or who are steadily moving toward it every month (and saying so in real numbers) than you listen to someone who has been at this less than 6 months, to someone who has been at it for years but who, for whatever the reasons, has not been successful with permanent weight loss, or to those who fail to regularly divulge concrete current personal weight/size information (simply because they provide no way to gauge their relative success). It can take some time to identify people with relevant weight loss success from other wonderful, well-meaning people who have not yet found all the keys to their own individual science projects. If you pay close attention, you'll find that long-term successes will almost always have this "stick with the basics" approach.

This turned out to be a crucial element in turning around my own initial failure at lowcarb my first two years. I got a lot of well meaning advice from a lot of great people that I wanted to believe. When I decided to listen only to two people I could find who were about my age, two women who had struggled a lot but had finally figured out what to do to get themselves to goal, their advice was strikingly similar, and not a whole lot like the advice of most others. Not so surprisingly, really, when I followed their advice, it started to "magically" work.

More than 9 years later...it still does.

Adele Stratton, Founder
www.leadwiththediet.com