Commonly Asked Questions

Bodyfat Loss/Seeing Results

How accurate is the SKYNDEX method for testing body fat?

The most accurate method for body fat testing is hydrostatic measurement (when combined with a lung capacity test and performed properly). The BodPod is a relatively new measurement standard that may be accurate, but both of these standards require at least 20 minutes per test, must b done in specific attire and under consistent conditions. The next most accurate method is caliper testing. Caliper tests are as accurate as the professional taking the measurement. They measure mm of subcutaneous body fat at specific sites and use a calculation to determine overall body fat percentage.

The SKYNDEX (Durnin formula) uses a four site measurement that is plugged into a computer chip inside the gun. It calculates total body fat based on hydrostatic weighing.

The measurements standards such as impedence (body fat measuring scales and electrodes) measure density, not body fat. They vary greatly measurement to measurement based on water retention. It is best to use a consistent measurement standard and have the same professional test your body fat each time you have it measured.

What is a healthy body fat for me?

Since body fat is distributed differently on each individual, there is no specific number that is best for everyone, but as a general guideline, most women who exercise four times per week and watch what they eat are happy between 21 and 27%. Men with the same habits are generally happy between 13 and 18%. Women college athletes average around 19%, male college athletes at about 11%. Female fitness models get down as low as 10%, male fitness models get down to under 6% body fat.

A healthy body fat is one that you're happy with.

Why am I not seeing results when I'm doing everything perfectly?

If a client feels as if they're doing a lot of work and their corresponding progress is slow, there are a few variables to analyze.

A client may believe that they're 100% on their program, but their perception of what they're doing is different than reality. (Especially if it's a lot better than what they were doing before they started).

1) Are you filling out a journal so that you can see what is actually happening each day?
2) Are you writing everything in your journal?
3) Are you forgetting about soft drinks or other liquids that you think may "not count" (including alcohol)?
4) Are you weighing and measuring their food?
5) Are you eating on time?
6) Are you skipping meals or calories in an attempt to make your program "work faster"?
7) Are you making the best food choices possible?
8) Are you doing all cardio sessions?

9) Are you checking their heart rate in every session?
10) Are you counting time IN your range or total cardio time?
11) Does your heartrate range need to be adjusted for caffeine or other stimulants?
12) Are you doing enough cardio?
13) Are you doing any strength training?

Many clients with severe dieting histories may be doing almost everything right and still see very slow progress. This may be because through years of dieting history (and certainly eating disorder histories), the enzyme system that surrounds the fat cells to help the body STORE fat is very thick, strong and active. It has been built up over the years and may take a while to break down. They have a very strong fat storage potential and need to change their body's ability to use fat for energy at an INTRACELLULAR level, which is exactly what Intrafitt is designed to do.

Every meal has the proper nutrient ratios to mobilize fat as efficiently as possible. Once the fat is mobilized, every cardio session will allow the fat to get into the muscle where it is converted to energy. Every weight training session you do will help increase your lean tissue (the fat burning engine) as well as stimulate the internal structure of your muscles to burn fat more efficiently. The body will start to break down its fat storing ability and become a faster metabolic machine.

The choice you have is to go back to your dieting habits and continue the cycle, or remember that you didn't become a fat storing machine overnight. The benefit is that every history can be overcome and every meal eaten on time with the right ratios, calories and food choices will make a difference. Every cardio session will make a difference and every workout will make a difference. All it takes is CONSISTENCY over time to get PERMANENTLY where you want to be.

Nutrition

IN GENERAL, WE RECOMMEND CLIENTS CHOOSE THEIR PROTEINS FROM LEAN ANIMAL-DERIVED SOURCES AND THEIR FATS FROM THE GROUND. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THE BEST CARB CHOICES ARE THOSE THAT COME MORE DIRECTLY FROM THE GROUND, ARE LESS PROCESSED AND HAVE A LOT OF FIBER.

Why is the 3-4 hour meal timing so critical?

In order to make forward progress towards ANY fitness goal, it is necessary to maintain a normal blood sugar level at all times. When the brain doesn't have the fuel it needs, it will force you to feel a "symptom of hypoglycemia" (fatigue, lethargy, lack of concentration, irritability, mood swings, carbohydrate cravings, sugar cravings, caffeine cravings, hunger, lightheadedness, dizziness, shakiness). This is a warning sign that means the brain is going into defense (against starvation) and it teaches itself how to STORE FAT more efficiently. It is impossible to have a good workout, gain lean mass, lose body fat or improve overall health in this state. Your meal frequency (meal timing) is one of four critical variables in your nutrition program.

What if I'm hungry between meals?
Why am I hungry too soon after I ate a perfect meal?

It's important to look at the past couple of days to determine why a client may be hungry. Each meal is designed to last 3-4 hours. Most often, when a client is hungry between meals, it is because they have inadvertently missed some protein or fat in a prior meal, have gone too long between meals in the past day or even the day prior, are doing their cardiovascular exercise at too high of an intensity, or have worked out in the morning with a low blood sugar level (exercised before eating). The best way to get back on a normal schedule is to eat a meal immediately, then move each remaining meal of the day closer together until no symptoms of hypoglycemia are felt. (Fatigue, lethargy, lack of concentration, irritability, mood swings, carbohydrate cravings, sugar cravings, caffeine cravings, hunger, lightheadedness, dizziness, shakiness).

Why am I hungry sometimes and full other times?

After you have at least 3 days of consistency on your program, you should feel satisfied after each meal and just ready to eat before each meal. If you do not feel this way, try these hints:

1) Make sure you are weighing and measuring your food
2) Keep a journal for 3 days and write in when you are hungry or full
3) Watch when you are doing your cardio sessions. If you did 3 or 4 workout days in a row, you may be hungry sooner; if you missed a couple of days you may not be hungry when it's time to eat.

What do I do if I am getting hungry (or having any symptoms of hypoglycemia) before it's meal time?

1) Increase your meal frequency by 30 – 60 minutes until you feel you are back on track. It may take a day or two and you may be on an increased meal frequency permanently.
2) This is the fastest way to increase your metabolic rate. You will want to increase meal frequency until it becomes non-functional for your schedule, then have your program re-run to see if you need a change in meal parameters (nutrient ratios or the size of your meals).

What if I'm not hungry for all the food?

During the first 2-3 days of starting a new eating program, your body may need an adjustment period. Each meal is designed to last you 3-4 hours. If you are not accustomed to eating frequently throughout the day, or are used to dieting to lose weight, it may seem like a lot of food. Try to break your meals in half and eat a half meal every 2 hours. (Each half meal must consist of protein, carbohydrates and fat). Within 2-5 days your appetite should be stimulated and you should be able to eat full meals every 4 hours.

What if I have a fasting blood draw in the morning and can't eat my first meal on time?

Eat your first meal as soon as you are done with the blood draw, then eat all meals for the day 30 – 60 minutes sooner than your normal schedule.

What if I have hormonal cravings for foods that I know are not on my meal plans?

If you just simply HAVE to have a food that you normally crave, during your menstrual cycle, you can increase your meal frequency by 30-60 minutes throughout the "trouble" days. If you still feel a strong urge, eat the food you crave (normally heavily carb and/or fat based) and eat it at a mealtime with a lean protein and some "free list" vegetables, then move on to the next meal.

When would my meal parameters change?

Your individual calories, grams of protein, carbs and fats per meal are based on many variables. The best way to determine when they should change is if you are feeling any symptoms of hypoglycemia. The first change would be to increase your meal frequency by closing the gap between all meals by 30 – 60 minutes.

As you lean body mass and your exercise schedules increase, you may also need more protein per meal. The last change we would make is to increase the size of each meal (calories per meal).

You can always use the Intrafitt website (www.intrafitt.com)to make these changes for yourself.

How do you determine how much protein, carbs and fat I need?

The factors that go into determining your nutrient ratios per meal are your current body composition, your body composition goals, and your nutrition, exercise, medical and dieting histories. Your nutrient ratios are one of four critical variables in creating the most efficient nutrition program for you. The others are meal timing (meal frequency), food choices and caloric intake per meal.

Why do I have to have a protein, carb and fat with every meal?

The nutrient ratios are designed to provide your body with everything it needs to help you reach your goal as efficiently as possible without any hypoglycemic symptoms.

Each meal consists of just enough protein to rebuild and repair the tissue you have broken down in your workouts and help maintain a normal blood sugar level. The protein intake in each meal also stimulates the enzyme system that mobilizes fat from storage into the bloodstream where it is available for use during your cardiovascular exercise.

The ratio of carbohydrates is designed to fuel all metabolic functions, provide you with the energy you need for your workouts, and to provide the brain with just enough glucose to avoid hypoglycemic symptoms, which stimulate the carbohydrate binge cycle.

The amount of fat in each meal is designed to provide your body with the essential fatty acids and temper the blood sugar level so that each meal lasts you approximately 4 hours.

What is a complete protein?

The difference between complete and incomplete proteins is in the amino acid structure of the protein. Complete proteins come from animal derived sources, (eggs, egg whites, chicken, fish, turkey, beef, all dairy products, etc…) and contain enough of all of the essential amino acids for optimal bio-availability. Complete proteins are usable by the body to help in the recuperation and repair of muscle tissue as well as causing a chain reaction to stimulate the enzyme system that mobilizes fat from storage into the bloodstream where it as available for use during your cardiovascular exercise.

Incomplete proteins come from vegetable derived sources, such as beans, tofu and soy. Although these foods are healthy and nutritious and should be incorporated into a varied nutrition program, they must be combined with other incomplete proteins or supplemented with free form amino acids to become bring up their limiting factor and be as bio-available as animal derived proteins.

Why can't I have soy instead of chicken and turkey?

Although soy is a healthy and nutritious food choice, and should be incorporated into a well rounded food plan, it is an incomplete protein and is not used the same way by the body as an animal derived protein.

SEE ABOVE ANSWER

Will this much protein be bad for my kidneys?

The nutrient rations in your Intrafitt program are safe and healthy. Intrafitt is not a "high protein" diet. If you have kidney disease, get approval from your physician before starting this or any other nutrition program.

Why should I use whey protein powder instead of soy?

SEE ABOVE ANSWER

It's too hard to eat all this protein on the run. Any suggestions?

Since it's important to eat protein with every meal, there are some quick protein choices. Low fat or non fat string cheese, beef or turkey jerky, protein bars (not to exceed 1 per day if possible), protein powder added to frozen or regular yogurt and pop top cans of tuna are all popular "to go" protein options.

Isn't eating too many eggs bad for your cholesterol?

In general, foods that are high in cholesterol should be kept to a minimum. Egg whites and egg substitutes are a good source of complete protein without the fat or cholesterol.

Which protein bar should I have?

Protein bars, like protein shakes, should be as individual as possible. It's always better to eat a meal whenever possible; no bar will give you exactly what you need, but if you are off on your meal times or have missed a meal, use a bar that best fits a HALF meal for you. This buys you 2 hours to get to a normal meal. If after 2 hours you still can't eat a normal meal, have another bar, then eat a meal within the next 2 hours. It is important to remember that you DON'T WANT TO EAT MORE THAN ONE FULL MEAL REPLACEMENT A DAY, whether that be a bars or shakes.

Why can't I have more than one shake a day?

Although your meal replacement shake is specific to your nutrient parameters, it is always better to eat real food. Shakes and bars are made from processed proteins and are sometimes high in sugar. They will never provide your body with the same effect as real food, and you may be hungry before it's time for a meal. They are valuable substitutes if it's difficult to eat breakfast before a morning workout, and if you are short on time during the day.

What if I'm a vegan?

Although it's more challenging to get the proper amount of complete protein in every meal as a vegan with an aggressive fitness goal, it's not impossible. Make soy protein choices as often as possible (with the many soy products available today), supplement low protein quality meals with an amino acid or soy protein powder if possible, and count tofu and beans as a carbohydrate.

How can I lose weight eating this many carbs?

The amount of carbohydrates in each meal is just enough to maintain a normal blood sugar level for 3-4 hours until your next meal. The carb ratio is also designed to fuel all metabolic functions, fuel your workouts, and provide the brain with just enough glucose to avoid hypoglycemic symptoms, which stimulate the carbohydrate binge cycle.

I feel bloated when I eat this many carbs.

If you have been following a low carb diet, it is necessary to gradually increase your carbohydrate intake over a week or two to the proper percentage per meal. It always helps to make the least refined carbohydrate choices possible. Foods that come more directly from the ground, like rice, yams, corn and oats are better choices than refined breads and muffins.

I thought I had to cut carbs to lose weight.

The concept behind cutting carbs out of the diet to "lose weight" is invalid. Although temporary weight loss may occur, it is not fat the body is shedding. Every gram of carbohydrates processed by the body, uses metabolic water in it's processing. When the carbs are cut out of the diet, the body drops an initial 5-8 pounds of water, causing an initial weight loss. After a length of time without the proper amount of carbs in each meal, the body slowly starts to break down muscle tissue in a process called gluconeogenesis in order to fuel the brain with the glucose it uses for energy. (Glucose is the end result of carbohydrate breakdown and is the only fuel the brain uses). This causes the brain to search elsewhere for it's fuel. As the body loses muscle tissue, more weight loss occurs, but unfortunately, it isn't fat the body has been shedding. Unless you have your body fat checked regularly, it's impossible to tell which type of tissue the body is losing by watching the scale.

What are the best oils to use?

Olive, Soybean, Canola, Corn and Sunflower are all high in unsaturated fats, and flaxseed oil is wonderful for salads and adding before serving a food.

How am I going to lose weight eating so many calories?

Your caloric intake will fluctuate based on the length of your day. It is designed MEAL BY MEAL, not DAY BY DAY. Since the human body doesn't function on a 24 hour basis, but is constantly using fuel, there a four critical variables in your nutrition program. These variables are caloric intake PER MEAL, nutrient ratios PER MEAL, proper food choices, and meal frequency (meal timing). As long as you stay on your recommended meal schedule, watch your portions, make good food choices, your program will allow you to mobilize FAT from storage as efficiently as possible.

What about food combining diets?

The theory of food combining has helped people with gastrointestinal symptoms identify which foods are irritating, but does not provide a normal blood sugar level throughout the day. If a client misses protein and fat in the morning (when the blood sugar level is at one of it's lowest points in the day), it is virtually impossible to regain the lost ground. Even if all the rest of the meals in the day are eaten on time and with the proper nutrient ratios, the blood sugar level will be chronically (and sometimes subtly) low. A low blood sugar level is counterproductive towards any fitness goal.

What do you think of blood type diets?

Blood typing is a theory developed in the 1950's. After reaching an initial goal with blood typing, it is necessary to modify (sometimes substantially) the nutrient parameters to lose body fat and gain lean tissue. The blood typing parameters then become irrelevant.

I thought some things were bad for you (jerky, aspartame, etc...).

It is always best to make the most natural food choices possible. Whole foods without preservatives or added sodium and sugar are the best options. It is best to use foods laden with artificial sweeteners and preservatives in moderation.

What are the best foods for antioxidants?

Kale, Garlic, Spinach, Brussel Sprouts, Alfalfa, Broccoli

Exercise

My heartrate range for fat burning feels low

The most efficient range for fat burning is 65-80% of your calculated maximum exercise heart rate based on your age.
If you have an abnormally high resting heart rate (over 70 upon waking), use caffeine or herbal amphetamines (ephedra, etc…), you may need to adjust your range slightly higher. Many clients are used to working out at too high of an intensity to burn fat efficiently.

The only indicator we have to know which substrate your body is using for energy (fat from storage or sugar from the muscle) is by your heart rate response during exercise. If your heart rate is too high, the body doesn't have time to process fat as its primary energy source; the demands are too great. It uses predominantly sugar from the muscle, and fatigues easily. If your body is using fat efficiently, it can maintain the exercise session for more than 45 minutes to an hour without fatigue (assuming you've been able to follow your nutrition parameters).

Exercising at a higher intensity is beneficial for your overall cardiovascular condition, and does wonders for the heart. You can do your recommended cardio time in your range, and also add 10 minutes or so at a higher intensity (followed by a cool down) if you want to improve your cardiovascular condition more quickly.

Will I see more progress if I do 7 days of cardio instead of 5?

The important cardiovascular variables to help you get to your goals are: Frequency (the number of session per week), Time (duration of each session), Intensity (your heart rate response during each session), and Type (anything that you like and can sustain consistently for 40 minutes or more, using the large muscle groups). It is always a good idea to take one day of complete rest per week. An increase in your cardio time or frequency up to 6 days at 60-75 minutes per session will help you utilize more fat overall. It is important to remember to work your way up to this over time, based on your current frequency and duration.

It's hard to stay in my heartrate range, what can I do?

Sometimes clients feel that they have to work harder than they are used to, or much easier than they are used to, to stay in their recommended heart rate range. This is a normal adaptation, just make sure you wear your monitor and adjust your pace accordingly.
One of the most frequent challenges is to stay in the tight range for all your allocated time. It's easy to over-correct when you are trying to adjust your intensity, pace or resistance. If you find that your heart rate fluctuates high and low, make a small adjustment in your intensity, pace or resistance, then wait 30 seconds. Watch your monitor and make another small adjustment if necessary. Do this until you are steadily in your range.

I don't have time to do all the cardio.

Four days of cardiovascular exercise per week is a minimum if fat loss is one of your top two goals. Even if you can only get in 30 minutes in each session, it is always better to do something than to skip the workout. If a client has an injury or is in a short period where it is impossible to do their cardio sessions, the nutrition parameters must be modified accordingly. Normally, we reduce the calories PER MEAL by 20-25% while maintaining the meal frequency, food choices and nutrient ratios.

Why is it harder to get into and stay in my range, than it was when I first started?

As your body (especially your heart) gets more efficient as a result of your consistent cardiovascular routine, you will have to pick up your pace or put more effort into your cardio session to get into and stay in your range. This is a wonderful physiologic effect of your program and shows you that you are in better shape.

How important is the weight training if I only want to lose body fat?

The three aspects of your overall program are equally important.

Proper nutrition is where the body reprograms itself to mobilize fat from storage efficiently, and supplies the muscles with the nutrients to make the desired changes.

Proper cardiovascular exercise causes the circulatory system to expand and become more efficient at delivering fat to the working muscles for fat loss as well as delivering nutrients to the working muscles for lean mass gain (along with improving overall health and reducing health risks).

Proper strength/resistance training causes the body to build a larger fat burning engine as well as changing the overall shape (and strength) of your body.

Good nutrition + cardiovascular exercise, (with no strength training) = you will be more fit and leaner, but a smaller version of yourself. It also becomes harder to lose fat over time with the same amount of lean tissue. It is sometimes necessary to increase the lean mass ratio to get to low body fat levels.

Good nutrition + strength training (without the cardiovascular exercise) = you will be stronger and heavier, but not necessarily leaner.

Good strength training + cardiovascular exercise (without proper nutrition) = you will be healthier and stronger, but feel like you are doing a lot of work with minimal results.

When would my exercise parameters change?

If you started with just cardiovascular exercise, you will want to add in some resistance training or cross-training as soon as your cardio routine becomes consistent. This will help work your muscles in a completely different way and can not only help accelerate fat loss, but also help you gain lean body mass, which is your fat burning engine.