

# **Fat Girl** PhD

Meal Plan: Round Two  
The Tricked Out Clean  
Eatin' Ass-Kickin' Edition



# Why Round Two?

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Round 1 was developed with the amazing Matt Peacock at Ascente Health & Fitness - and helped me to lose **well over 130lbs**, without being hungry.

In short: it was pure awesomeness, and works beautifully alongside the Exercise Programme, which you can download [here](#).

However, that plan involves a lot of warming, winter foods - not least because it was published in January 2013, when it was... Well, winter. Makes sense, no?

But having moved to London and found myself considerably shorter on time, and more interested in foods I could cook in **one or two pans (at most!)** - and with a newfound love of protein-based breakfasts and tricked-out salads - I've found myself eating in a pretty different style to the original plan.

So... 'Twas time.

## What's different?

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Well, first up - the breakfasts are a little more protein heavy, and the mid-morning snacks are a little lighter. That's mostly because I just don't have the time, these days, to have a big snack at 11am - so it's easier to have, say, some almonds and blueberries, **rather than a full-blown mini-meal**.

That's also a result of my patches of training with Tom Dyer at Ultimate City Fitness, who introduced me to the idea - because they keep you full for longer, and frankly, they just feel a bit... Indulgent.

Yum.

Also, you'll find the calorie content on this plan is **a little lower** than the original version. That's for a couple of reasons.

Firstly - my BMR is now a lil' less than it was. You'll find a full explanation of the BMR-logic on page 4, but in short, as I've gotten smaller, I've required fewer calories to match up to my BMR - so I, personally, have been eating a lil' less.

I'd still strongly recommend you follow the BMR calculation, especially if you've got a lot of weight to lose.

But the feedback from some of you guys after the original Meal Plan was that it didn't seem flexible enough, particularly for those people whose BMR was lower - like mine is now. So with that in mind, each day on this plan hits around **1500-1600kcal each and every day**.

That's not to say you should aim for that - but it's a guideline to allow you to have **larger servings of the things you like**. If you're working to a higher BMR, you should add more snacks, like blueberries and almonds, and increase the serving sizes of the meals to allow you to hit that number and optimise your metabolism.

The idea of this meal plan isn't to prescribe what you should eat - and I wouldn't recommend following it to the letter for a whole week because that'd involve spending more money than I, personally, ever have to blow on food. Instead, I'll do **certain days two or three times**, or mix and match from different sections depending on how I feel, and what I'm in the market for.

And also - I don't like diet plans, or strictly instructed meal ideas, because personally, I don't think they teach you anything about livin' in the real world.

Nope - think of this as a kind of 'Greatest Hits' of recipes I've enjoyed over the last few months - seven 'perfect' days of **great nutrition, and tasty food**. They're a great way to get you cooking, and enjoying real, clean food that tastes good, and makes you feel great.



# The Need to Know Stuff

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This meal plan is designed to introduce you to good, clean food with a focus on the healthy - at sustainable levels that you can maintain forever. Happy days.

The idea is that if you're following this meal plan, with the original exercise programme three or four times a week, you should be able to **lose fat and build muscle – without feeling hungry or deprived**. But it's also a great way to learn to cook easy, quick and clean foods regardless of whether you're following the exercise programme or not - because the nutritional balance and quality of the food here should support pretty much any exercise regime that floats your boat.

It's essential, though, to bear a few things in mind.

1) It's not a diet.

Firstly, as I've said time and time again – we're not dieting here. If you're expecting to lose 10lbs a week – like you might on, say, a low-carb diet, or some other crazy-ass fad – then you'll be very disappointed indeed. **It's just not possible to lose that amount of weight and keep it off**, unless you're okay with the idea of still eating cabbage soup (or whatever your method is) twenty years from now.

Instead, we're working on a lifestyle change.

2) Home cooked food is way better than any packaged meal plan.

We're following the 80/20 rule here – so a good 80% of the food you'll be eating is fresh and natural. And the fact that you're cooking from scratch, rather than ordering in or eating ready meals, has a whole bunch of added benefits.

The very act of cooking will help you to burn calories by increasing **our old friend NEAT (non-exercise activity thermogenesis)**. Increase that, and your body will be more efficient at burning calories all day long – meaning that we're on to a winner on the weight loss front.

More than that, though, cooking is empowering. The satisfaction of getting your food, taking it home, and making something delicious - completely from scratch - is, to me, totally beyond comparison. When you sit down to a meal, knowing it's something you made all on your own, you're closing the loop - from source, to satisfaction.

And the more you cook your own food, the more you'll realise just what it is that you like to eat. For instance, a lot of processed food is either **really sweet, or really salty... And that's about it**. After a little while, you'll come to find yourself able to identify different herbs, spices and tastes that you like – and soon enough, you'll be coming up with recipes of your own.

Recipes which, incidentally, I would **love** you to send me. Go on. Feel free.

3) Good health doesn't exist in a vacuum.

This whole programme is about putting you back in control of your eating. It's about understanding **what you like, what you don't, and, frankly, what's got you here in the first place**.

We've all got different reasons for wanting to lose weight – but if you don't know why you've gained it, you'll find it considerably more difficult to lose.



I can't stress this enough – we're looking at a long-term change here, because this whole programme is founded on the idea of **a holistic approach to your health**. Exercise is one part, and food is another – but it's important to give yourself the opportunity to look at your whole life in every aspect, so that you can take control of it.

# How Does It Work?

You won't lose weight quickly on this plan – in fact, some weeks you might not seem to have lost weight at all – but combined with the exercise programme, you'll find that your body shape changes first. **Have faith in that, and the scales will follow** – and you'll find yourself eating well, and working out in a way that fits in with your lifestyle forever, rather than just for a couple of weeks.

So... How does it work?

Let's look at how traditional methods of weight loss function. Usually, you'd take your daily energy expenditure (your metabolic rate) and take 500 calories per day off of that. That works in theory, because **if you're 500kcal a day down, that's equivalent to 3500kcal a week**. Which is equal to a 1lb weight loss.

Makes sense, right?

Mmmm... Kind of.

The trouble with this method is that as you approach your target weight, **you'll find yourself suddenly unable to shift those pounds**. That's because your body's pretty smart – so it adapts to losing that 500kcal a day, gets itself into starvation mode, and lowers your metabolic rate.

Meaning not only are you kinda hungry, but also – you're not losing any weight.

What this programme suggests, instead, is that we take your **target weight into account as a starting point**. I, for instance, would like to be 10st 7lbs (147lbs, or 66.8kg) because that's a healthy weight for my height, according to my BMI.

We then work out what your BMR (basal metabolic rate) would be if you were already at that weight. Your BMR is **how many calories you need to consume for your body to function**, assuming you don't actually bother getting out of bed – and you can work yours out here. In my case, that's 1422kcal.

Then, to account for the fact that I do get out of bed (most days, anyway) we have to apply something called the Harris-Benedict principle. That's a formula that works like this:

- If you're sedentary (you get little or no exercise) multiply your BMR by 1.2.
- If you're lightly active (light exercise/sports 1-3 days/week) multiply it by 1.375.
- If you're moderately active (moderate exercise/sports 3-5 days/week) it's multiplied by 1.55.
- If you are very active (hard exercise/sports 6-7 days a week) multiply your BMR by 1.725.
- And if you are extra active (very hard exercise/sports & physical job or 2x training) multiply it by 1.9.

Now, it's not unusual to overestimate your activity levels – but most people are **somewhere between sedentary and lightly active these days**, what with desk jobs, commutes and the like, and it's a much safer bet to assume lower, rather than higher in this case.

The result of this equation tells you the amount of calories you need to **maintain** your goal weight. It's your daily energy requirement, and what you need to consume to avoid the body going into sleep mode, or gaining weight - so you have to make sure that what you're eating over the course of a day meets that number.

Your body will adapt to that being the number of calories it expects you to eat on any given day – and so, safe in the knowledge that that's how many calories it'll be getting, it'll work to getting you to that weight, so that you can use those calories most efficiently. That means that when you reach your target weight – which you will, in time – **you won't have to readjust your diet to compensate for the calorie deficit you'd have if you were on a low-calorie programme**. Boom.



So - assuming you're doing this meal plan in conjunction with the exercise programme, we're shooting for a level of activity that the Harris-Benedict formula would call "lightly active" – meaning you take your BMR, and multiply that by 1.375. So, using me as an example, this happens:

$$1422 \times 1.375 = 1955 \text{ calories per day}$$

So for my target weight, which is a healthy BMI for my height, I need to be consuming **just shy of 2000kcal a day** – which just so happens to be bang on the nose of the UK government guidelines for a woman's daily calorie intake.

Coincidence? I think not.

Let's use another example. Say you're a man, who's 5'10" tall, aiming for a body weight of 11st 7lbs (161lbs, or 73.1kg). Using the BMR calculator, you've got a BMR of 1788kcal if you stay in bed.

So again, we do the equation:

$$1788 \times 1.375 = 2458 \text{ calories per day}$$

Again, it really isn't a coincidence that this is in line with the government guidelines for you blokes – namely, that you should be aiming for 2500kcal each day.

Because this edition of the plan gives you around 1500-1600kcal per day, you've got some room to tweak according to what floats your boat - hopefully giving you the opportunity to get stuck in, making the right choices according to your own likes and dislikes.

This is where it's important to understand the importance of good nutrition. If you add 500kcal in crisps and sweets, you're not giving your body the good things it needs to be really well nourished.

Instead, you should shoot for extra bits of lean meat, potatoes, and veggies. If in doubt, I'd recommend just increasing the portion sizes a little in your main meals – because this whole meal plan has been designed to be **well balanced, as well as tasty**.

You can probably see from reading this that there's nothing groundbreaking in here, really. That eating in line with your RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) and getting more exercise will lead to a healthy lifestyle just ain't that surprising.

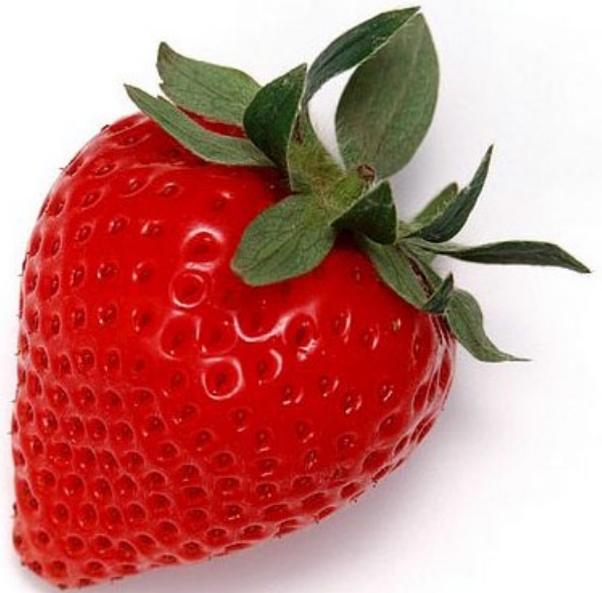
But what's important is **letting your body adapt to that healthy BMI you're aiming for**, while eating really good, nutritious food. By following this plan, you'll be eating the right amount of macro-nutrients (carbs, fats and proteins), re-educating yourself about real food, and changing your tastes so that eventually, it won't seem like you're on a diet at all.

These sorts of changes are ones you can make today, and keep up for the rest of your life. Combined with the exercise programme, eating like this has helped me to lose almost half of my body weight – whilst **losing fat, and gaining muscle, and, frankly, whilst living**.

If you can adapt to this lifestyle change, it doesn't matter if you cheat from time to time, or if you eat out occasionally, or have a few too many beers at the weekend every so often. **That's fine**. You haven't fallen off the wagon, or ruined your diet, or any of those old terms for failure that the diet industry promotes.

You're just **living**. And at the end of the day, that's what it's all about.

So – let's eat!



# Drinkin' & Sleepin'

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Regular followers of my Twitter account will know that [I just love coffee](#).

Love it.

I just cannot seem to function before I've had my morning cup o' Joe - because another thing I really love is [sleep](#).

Mmmm... Sleep.

Drinking and sleeping deserve a page of their own in this plan, because they're things you should be [thinking about at all times while you're changing your diet](#).

You should be drinking [as much water as possible](#) - not least because being adequately hydrated will help your body to burn fat, and to escape the pangs we sometimes mistake for hunger, but which are actually just thirst.

It takes a little while to get into the habit of drinking more water - I know at first, I was complaining that I was full all the time, feeling like my tum was a'jigglin' with a [severe case of water belly](#). But these days, I'm never without a big glass of water - and my God do I make a lot of trips to the office water cooler.

Aim for about [six glasses a day](#) (of any size), or one every time you eat. And if you're struggling to keep track, fill a few bottles with tap water instead. That'll help you to keep an eye on how much you've got through.

Then, there's tea and coffee. You can have [as many of these as you like](#), excluding things like lattes (which are more milk than coffee) - but try to just use a dash of milk, rather than a big slug each time. Personally, I'll have a couple of cups of coffee in the morning, and a couple of mugs of green tea in the afternoon - because apparently, it's a great way to get your metabolism going (as well as being tasty, if you pick a fruity variety!)

So staying [adequately hydrated](#) is important. Don't forget it.

It's also important to make sure you're [getting enough sleep](#). That might seem odd, given i'm also suggesting you get moving more, to keep calories burning - but it's essential if you're making a 'whole life' change.



A good night's sleep can make a world of difference to your ability to stay on track - because when you're well rested, you're more likely to feel [in control of your choices](#).

I can't be alone in having eaten a big ol' fatty breakfast on a morning when I've had too little sleep, or having turned to sugar as fuel when I'm feeling exhausted. But these things just lead to [a bigger crash later](#) - meaning you're even more tired once the "buzz" has worn off. That sucks.

But if you're doing this plan with the exercise programme, you'll probably find you're [a little more tired anyway](#) - because you're walking, cycling, or cross-training for at least an hour, three or four times a week. That seems easy when you're doing it - but I know for a fact that I sleep a heck of a lot better on a workout day.

Above everything else, making time to get enough sleep - however much that is for you - means that you're being mindful of everything your body needs, and giving yourself the care and attention that will help you to achieve a [real sense of wellbeing](#).

And that's a heck of a lot better than just being on a diet.

# Day 1

## Breakfast

- 1 Smoked Mackerel fillet
- 1 Boiled Egg
- 5 stalks of Tenderstem Broccoli - or, if you don't fancy that at breakfast, some spinach and red peppers
- 1 slice of Rye Bread (I recommend the Village Bakery version - delicious!)
- 1 teaspoon of Total Greek Yogurt

## Lunch

- 1 Grilled Chicken Breast
- Spinach, red bell peppers, gherkins, cucumber, sun-dried tomatoes, and any other veggies
- Dressing - lemon juice and balsamic vinegar

Even though it seems a little more hard work than it may be worth, I always make my salad and give it a good mix in a large bowl before serving it on a plate. It'll really mix it together and make it tastier both to eat and to look at!



## Dinner

- 1 steak (approx. 180g), grilled
- 5 leaves of fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 – 1 tsp Very Lazy chopped chillies
- 1/2 tsp Very Lazy chopped garlic
- 1 slice of watermelon, diced
- 3 mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 an avocado
- 1/2 pack of puy lentils and quinoa
- As much spinach or greens as you like!

[Click here for the recipe.](#)

## Snacks

- 1x Apple
- 10 Almonds
- Total 0% Greek Yogurt, with 1tsp honey and a medium banana



Tip of the day: Think about why you're trying to change your diet. If it's just to lose weight, and not for your own personal happiness, then hell... I'm not even sure what to tell you. Lifestyle changes are for you, and nobody else - so come up with three reasons **you** want this, and write 'em down. I promise, when your motivation's flagging, you'll be really glad you did.

# Day 2

## Breakfast

170g pot Total 0% Greek Yogurt  
1 Medium Banana  
6 Strawberries  
1 tsp Honey  
1 crumbled Stem Ginger Oatcake

## Lunch

130g M&S Mexican Chilli Chicken  
1/2 pack M&S Edamame & Pea Salad  
5 Asparagus Spears  
Plus sweetcorn, peppers, red cabbage and grated carrot if you fancy 'em - go nuts!

You don't have to buy the M&S chicken, nor do you have to go for the Mexican Chilli variety - I'm just plumping for it because they're usually a) on offer and b) in portion-sized packs. But 130g of chicken and a mixed salad will do the job perfectly!



## Dinner

1 (good quality) Steak Burger  
1 Sweet Potato  
1/2 Red Onion  
3 Mushrooms  
50g Petits Pois  
1 handful Spinach  
85g 0% Fage Greek Yogurt  
1/2 tsp Harissa Paste  
1 tsp Roasted Red Peppers  
1 tsp Olive Oil

[Click here for the recipe.](#)

## Snacks

1 Celery Stick with 2 Tbsp Almond Butter (I know this sounds icky, but honestly, try it. It's delicious!)  
12 Cashews

Tip of the day: Eat (and exercise) mindfully. If you're rushing your food, and hating every minute of your workouts, chances are you'll lose momentum pretty quickly - so slow down, and really feel the benefits. You're eating well, giving your body the fuel it needs to work hard, and exercise as nature intended - so bask in that, and enjoy every minute.

# Day 3

## Breakfast

1 BBQ Salmon Fillet (Sainsbury's used to sell these - but I can only find them in Waitrose)  
1 Sweet Red Pepper  
Spinach  
1 slice of Rye Bread (I recommend the Village Bakery version - delicious!)  
1x teaspoon of Total Greek Yogurt

If you can't get hold of a BBQ salmon fillet, don't worry - a regular one is absolutely fine! Alternatively, you can switch for mackerel (tinned is my personal go-to quick breakfast choice), chicken or ham - whatever you prefer.

## Lunch

1 large Chicken Breast, grilled with skin  
2 slices Parma Ham  
30g Goat's Cheese  
Any or all of the following: spinach, red peppers, beetroot, red cabbage, tomatoes, cucumber.



## Dinner

12 King Prawns  
1/2 Red Onion  
1/2 Green Pepper  
1/2 Green Chilli (optional)  
50g Mushrooms  
1 tsp Lemon Juice  
Fresh Parsley and Basil to taste  
150g New Potatoes, boiled

This is super easy, and really gorgeous. Boil the potatoes, and when they're nearly done, fry the onion, pepper, chilli and prawns for a couple of minutes, before adding the mushrooms, lemon juice and herbs. Easy peasy!

## Snacks

1x Apple  
20 Cashew Nuts  
170g Total Greek Yogurt, with 1tsp honey and a medium banana



Tip of the day: Show yourself some love. It's easy to look in the mirror and see nothing but bad things - but I'm willing to bet you really don't look as bad as you think. In fact, if you really focus, I'm sure you can find at least one way in which you're gorgeous. Focus on that - and every day, add a new thing to that list. Body confidence is a gradual process - but it's worth every second.

# Day 4

## Breakfast

2 Large Eggs  
1/4 Avocado  
4 Sun-dried Tomatoes  
5 Cubes of Feta (about 1cm each)  
1 slice of Rye Bread  
Herbs and spices to taste (I recommend fresh basil or parsley)

Mix the eggs and feta in a small bowl with your chosen herbs - then scramble in a teaspoon of olive or coconut oil. When they're almost done, throw in the tomatoes and avocado, and serve with toasted bread.

## Lunch

130g M&S Sweet Chilli Chicken  
1/4 Butternut Squash, cubed  
1 tbsp Cottage Cheese  
Watercress, tomatoes and other veggies



## Dinner

1 Medium Chicken Breast  
1-2 tbsp Curry Paste (start with one - taste half way through to see if you need more!)  
2 tbsp Total Greek Yogurt  
1/4 Red Onion  
1 tsp Very Lazy Chopped Garlic  
Handful of Petits Pois  
1/2 Courgette  
1/2 Red and Yellow Peppers  
As much spinach as you like!

Fry the onions and garlic in 1 tsp olive or coconut oil, then add the chicken until brown. Add the peppers, courgettes and petit pois, followed by 1 tsp curry paste, and stir until the veggies are warmed through.

Add in the yogurt, followed by more curry paste according to your personal preference. Simmer until creamy but not liquid, and serve on a bed of spinach.

## Snacks

Slice of Watermelon  
20 Almonds  
20 Blueberries

Tip of the day: Give someone a compliment, and mean it. The buzz of making someone else feel good is infectious - and it'll make you feel amazing, too.

# Day 5

## Breakfast

220g Porridge Oats, made with whole milk  
1 Medium Pear  
1 tsp Honey  
3 Pecan Nuts, crushed  
Cardamom and cinnamon to taste

Add any spices you like to the porridge while cooking, and for a softer bite, peel and chop the pear and poach in water for about 10 minutes before adding to your porridge.

Top with honey and pecan nuts for a lovely, full-textured, tasty breakfast.

## Lunch

1 Wholemeal Pitta, toasted  
110g Smoked Salmon  
1 tbsp Cottage Cheese or Total Greek Yogurt  
As much spinach and cucumber as you like



## Dinner

1 Poached Egg  
2 Rashers of Back Bacon, Grilled  
1 Slice Rye Bread  
Spinach and vegetables - as much as you like

## Snacks

2 Oatcakes  
1 tbsp Hummus  
4 Cherry Tomatoes  
10 Cashew Nuts  
1 Medium Apple

Remember, if you're not into bacon at dinner or sweet porridge at breakfast, you don't have to eat today's meals in this order - feel free to switch 'em around!



Tip of the day: Spend a little time doing absolutely nothing. It doesn't have to be long - just five minutes will do it. It's much easier to stay in control of your positive habits and all-round good stuff if you feel like occasionally, the whirlwind stops and you have time for you. So stop - hammertime - and enjoy the silence for as long as you need.

# Day 6

## Breakfast

2 Large Eggs  
1/4 Red Onion  
1 tsp Very Lazy Chopped Garlic  
1 tsp Very Lazy Chopped Chillies  
1/2 Sweet Red Pepper  
4 Button Mushrooms  
30g Chorizo  
5 cubes of Feta (about 1cm each)  
1 tsp Total Greek Yogurt  
Herbs and spices to taste (Cajun spice mix is a firm favourite!)

Fry the onions, garlic and chillies in 1 tsp of oil, followed by the red pepper, chorizo and mushrooms (in that order.) In a small bowl, mix your eggs, yogurt and feta, and once the veg is cooked through, pour the veg and chorizo in another bowl and put the egg mixture in the pan.

Once it's cooking on the bottom, pour your veg and chorizo back in, and allow to cook through - turning over once to get a nice crispy top.



## Lunch

1 Wholemeal Pitta, toasted  
1 tbsp Green Pesto  
45g Buffalo Mozzarella or Goat's Cheese  
50g Parma Ham  
3 Sun-dried Tomatoes  
Plus spinach and beetroot if it floats your boat!

## Dinner

10 King Prawns  
1/2 tsp Wholegrain Mustard  
1 tsp Lemon Juice  
1/2 handful Parsley  
1/2 Red Onion  
1 tsp Garlic  
Serve with spinach and pea shoots

## Snacks

1 slice of Watermelon  
170g pot Total 0% Greek Yogurt  
3 Strawberries  
1 tsp Honey  
1 crumbled Stem Ginger Oatcake

Tip of the day: Make a note of something you've done lately that you're proud of. It might be eating well, or exercising more - but it could be anything. Treasure it!

# Day 7

## Breakfast

2 Rashers of Bacon  
1 Fried Egg  
1/2 Wholemeal Roll  
Spinach

(Because it's Day 7 - so why the hell not?)

## Lunch

1 Salmon Fillet, baked in 1 tsp Honey and 1 tsp Lemon Juice, Black Pepper and Dill  
Any (or all) of the following: asparagus, grilled peppers, sugar snap peas, cucumber  
Serve with 1 tbsp Greek Yogurt on the side

If you can, marinade the salmon in the honey, lemon and black pepper overnight beforehand - this'll help the taste really get through and will make for an even more delicious lunch!



## Dinner

150g Roast Lamb  
60g Quinoa (Merchant Gourmet do a good ready-made version, because I still can't seem to cook it)  
1/2 Red Onion  
1/2 Sweet Red Pepper  
1 tsp Very Lazy Chopped Garlic  
30g Fennel  
1/2 cup Pomegranate Seeds  
1 tsp Lemon Juice  
Fresh Mint and Rosemary to taste  
Serve with spinach or boiled kale

While your lamb is roasting (I recommend adding 1tsp olive oil and balsamic vinegar to make it extra juicy), fry the red onion, garlic, peppers and fennel and add to the pre-cooked quinoa.

Mix in your lemon juice and herbs, and for the last 15 minutes, put in the oven with the lamb to soak up the juices - adding your pomegranate seeds right at the end.

## Snacks

20 Almonds  
20 Blueberries



Tip of the day: Get some fresh air. Even if it's only for 10 minutes, leaving the house and taking a walk, jog or run will refresh you (and give you a real boost.)

# A Word on Nutrition

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This is excerpted from a post on nutrition I wrote a long time ago, with the help of Matt - and it's a great beginner's guide to the fundamentals of nutrition and a balanced diet.

Despite that – it's long. So go make a cup of tea, and then get comfortable. This is going to take considerably longer than just saying 'you are only allowed to eat cabbage soup' because it's more complicated than that. But it's also totally worth it.

The thing about nutrition – certainly to my mind – is that it's really simple, but for some reason, the education on what makes a healthy, balanced diet just doesn't seem to be getting through. [Diet industry dollars vastly outweigh any marketing budget that real food, and sensible nutrition can offer](#) - so it's easy to find the really worthwhile information getting drowned out by the "next big diet craze."

But diets don't work - and here's why, from Matt:

*"The body is a really, really amazing machine. It's resilient, and has an astounding ability to overcome difficult situations – that's why we've survived as a species in all conditions, across the globe. Our bodies are incredibly adaptive."*

*So when you go on a calorie-restricted diet, your body adapts to that, just as it would any other situation. The body's mechanism for coping with restricted periods of food intake is to go into a sort of "Sleep Mode" – storing and saving as much power and energy as it can.*

*It'll perform the tasks you normally do more efficiently, because it knows that there probably won't be enough calories to go at full capacity – and any excess it does find it'll store as fat to prepare for the prolonged periods where it doesn't feel you're eating enough. That's why you can lose weight this way, but still be quite 'flabby' – because the number on the scale is going down, but the body's actually storing more fat."*

So dramatically reducing your calorie intake just doesn't help you achieve what you're aiming for, long-term.

The good side of your body being so adaptive, though, is that when it's getting all the right things, in the right balance, it'll adapt to that too – which is why the whole 'lifestyle change' thing is so crucial. [Change your life, and your body will keep up](#) to make sure you're running as efficiently as possible – and if you're making the change from an unbalanced, unhealthy diet to a good one, you can pretty much guarantee you'll lose weight (and crucially – keep it off.)

Good nutrition is a matter of having a little of everything. Understanding that your body needs protein, carbohydrates, and fats in the right balance is key, because each of these things has a different role to play in keeping your body [as efficient and healthy as possible](#). Carbs, as well as being an important energy source, are necessary for transporting some of the nutrients (among other things) around the body; protein helps to build muscle; and fats provide essential fatty acids, and helps the body to absorb certain vitamins that it can't make the most of without fat to dissolve them.

These nutrients do lots of other things too – but what I'm getting at here is that they're important in different ways. Cutting fat, or carbs, will only ever set you back in the end. As the British Nutrition Foundation points out:

*"Our diets should be based on bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods and rich in fruit and vegetables. A variety of foods from these two groups should make up two-thirds of the food we eat.*

*Most of the remaining third of the diet should be made up of milk and dairy foods, meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein, with limited amounts of foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar. Most of us eat too much salt and it is a good idea to check food labels to find those with a lower salt content and to minimise the amount of salt you add to food at home."*



The thing you'll notice is that most of these things – with the exception of 'foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar' – are not processed foods. They're ingredients. That's why I tend to avoid processed stuff where I can – because it's usually a pretty safe bet that if it comes in a packet and has a two year shelf-life, it's probably chock full of sugar and fat, not to mention [all sorts of crazy chemicals that just have no place in my diet](#).

The key is keeping it simple – and tasty.

One way to assess where you're going wrong, nutritionally, is to [write down everything you eat for a couple of days](#), and then compare it to that. I didn't realise how much sugar I was eating until I started writing it all down at first – but spending time thinking about what you're currently doing is a good way to start sorting out your diet.



If you're not a big fan of cooking, or even if you're a bit of a gourmet chef, the food you eat when you're not thinking about it reflects who you are, and your relationship with food.

Taking an honest look at your own resources – be they financial, skills-wise or even just taste – is a necessary step in moving forward into positive changes. That's why it's so important to be educated on nutrition as a whole, rather than just deciding you have to cut carbs, or starve, or whatever – this sort of knowledge gives you the power to [make your own decisions and actually eat food you enjoy](#) whilst still living a healthy lifestyle.

Because in a balanced diet, one treat, or one day where all you eat is toast, cake and curry because you have a hangover (I have done that – recently – no shame) will not make you gain 10lbs. It's not like when you're on a diet, where the logic is that everything has to be restricted and that one 'cheat' automatically means you're a failure.

Lifestyle should be just that – life. [Eating well, and being happy, means having a little of everything](#) – and not feeling guilty about it. The 80/20 rule is a good one to go by, because if you're doing everything right 80% of the time, the 20% where you're not won't really matter. I mean, I personally know that I can't have a whole packet of biscuits in my cupboards because I will gnaw my way through them without even thinking about it. But if I've got a craving for a sweet fix, I'll go out and do it – but I'll just buy as much as I need.

It's about balance, and understanding that it's (feel free to yawn here) a [lifestyle change](#). I'm living it – and I know it's a permanent thing, rather than just something I'll do until I reach my target weight.

It is totally possible to have a healthy relationship with food, as both a fuel source and a pleasure, while losing weight – but you do have to be patient and take the time to really understand it.

It's a learning process, but one which pays dividends in the long-term – and with obesity predicted to top 60% in some US states by 2030, there's no better time to start learning it.

Not just for yourself, or for the ten, twenty, or two hundred pounds you need to lose – but for future generations too. It's possible to eat better, and be happier, by making small changes to your life – and I promise, [the investment you make in learning it now will pay off](#).

After all... You are what you eat.



# About Fat Girl, PhD

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I'm a fat girl. I've lost a fair amount of weight, admittedly – but trust me, I'm an expert in being a fat girl. And I run the blog: Fat Girl, PhD.



In 2010, I was 290lbs, and I needed crutches to walk. I was in such intense knee pain on a daily basis that I was taking upwards of 20 painkillers a day, resulting in an addiction to opiates, and a general sense of having [no idea what the hell I was doing](#). And I was newly single, having been co-dependently limping – quite literally – through my time at university, only to find myself graduating into a recession in which I was virtually unemployable. Times were bleak.

But after moving into a flat conveniently positioned above a curry house, across the road from a Subway, a Chinese, and a chippy, I discovered a local gym. Since then, I've lost [almost half my body weight](#), and gained an insight into feminism, self-esteem, and what it means to be a woman.

And so, one night in April 2012, I was sitting at home, wearing a bad hat and fluffy socks, freezing my butt off and waiting for my house to heat up – so on a whim, [I started a blog](#). I'd lost a fair amount of weight by that point, so I figured I had something to share – and my first post was read by a grand total of ten people. At least three of those were my Mum, my Dad, and my sister, and I have a feeling two of the others were me, testing whether it worked on my laptop and my phone. A grand entrance it was not.

But pretty quickly, it became something huge. Something which really has changed – or rather, taken over – my life. In the last 12 months, I've had over [150,000 unique visitors](#), who've racked up over 300,000 page views – and I've had some pretty amazing coverage from big media outlets, including the Huffington Post, NBC News, MailOnline, The Sun, The Star and a couple of BBC radio stations.

Frankly, I've been totally floored by it. The numbers, the publicity, and so on have all been so far beyond what I'd expected that I can't quite get my head around it.

But more than that, I've been amazed by the crazy levels of kindness I've seen in response to some of my posts. I receive amazing emails, tweets and Facebook messages every day, but to quote just a tiny selection:

*"This is a safe place for me. I feel like it's a brilliant example to all of us of how to live, really, truly live, not just exist."*

*"This blog has been a welcome refuge. Thank you for the work you do to demonstrate the importance of nutrition, wellness, and emotional growth. Thank you for confirming that "mistakes" don't mean failure, and that "success" is little more than a day lived with joy and intention and self-possession."*

*"Please keep changing the world. Thank you for helping all of us who are desperate for honest help and a legitimate, understandable path to a healthier life."*

One of my most recent posts, called "Body Shaming, and the Secret to Effective Weight Loss," was by far my most widely read post. It involved me, standing in my knickers, flipping the v's at snark culture and [the idea that weight loss makes you perfect](#). It doesn't.

I'm proudly not perfect, and I'm of the mind-set that [accepting your flaws is the route to a healthier life](#). Yes, in a way, it's a health blog – and I feature healthy recipes, workouts, and so on – but I'm also the first to admit that I love cake, and will happily lose weekends from time to time to pizza and wine. That's okay. That's what being a real woman is about.

Of course, it's taken me a long time to get to this point. Three years ago, I was morbidly obese, weighing in at over 290lbs. I needed crutches to walk, and was popping prescription painkillers like sweets to get me through the day. Things weren't good – and that makes it kind of a miracle that nowadays, I weigh almost half that. [I run, I lift weights, and I enjoy every minute of my life](#). That's pretty cool.

But the main thing I've learned over the course of this journey is that no matter what your size, your shape, your weight, or anything else – you deserve to be happy.

Unfortunately, as women, there are a lot of things that stand in the way of that. Women's magazines, for one thing, seem intent on bashing self-esteem into submission; and the stigma surrounding binge eating, and in fact eating at all when you're a little on the heavy side, does nothing to help people who need [advice and guidance, rather than judgement and snarkiness](#).

I've become, to put it simply, a [feminist](#). I believe that we've got it entirely in our power to put an end to poor body image and low self-esteem, and that if we can fix these issues, healthy lifestyles – including weight loss – will inevitably follow. It's just a matter of making it happen.

And I'm getting there, slowly. My readers have, between them, lost over [4000lbs in the last 18 months](#), through taking control of their health and changing their attitude to their bodies. Most of them have done this without following a diet plan – because the whole diet industry is something I'm passionately, angrily against. They've just started eating real food, enjoying regular exercise and – crucially – accepting their bodies for being awesome.

It's that kind of thing that keeps me writing, even though I have to work hard to balance it with my job, and some semblance of a real life. It's worth it, because it turns out [people are amazing, and can do incredible things if they believe it's possible](#).

I'm shouting from my soapbox in the darkest corner of the internet – but I'd like to think that in my own way, I'm cancelling out some of the bad karma that the media puts out every day to squish our self-esteem and make us miserable.

And if I can help even one more person flip the v's to that culture...

That'd be mission accomplished.



# Contact Fat Girl, PhD

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I'm always glad to hear from my lovely readers - although I receive a lot of emails, so it may take a little while to reply, but I promise... I will!

I also offer a variety of personal training and coaching packages, both in person in Central London, and globally via Skype - so if you feel like you need a bit of a boost, please get in touch and we'll see what works for you.

Finally, if you have a media or PR request, please pop "Media Request" in the subject line and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

Email: [fatgirlphd@gmail.com](mailto:fatgirlphd@gmail.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/fatgirlphd](http://www.facebook.com/fatgirlphd)

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## Disclaimer & Legal Stuff

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I'm sure it goes without saying, but you should always consult with your doctor before starting a new diet or exercise programme - especially if you have any underlying medical conditions.

Everything in this programme is the exclusive copyright of Katie Lowe and Matt Peacock (duh - we wrote it) and if we find you stealing it, we'll find someone to break your legs. Or something.

It's also important to note that neither of us are doctors or dieticians, and this programme is purely for your own guidance, devised from experience and is offered in good faith. That means if you decide to follow it, we can't legally be held liable or responsible if it doesn't work for you, or if you experience any adverse side effects as a result - because everyone is different, and if there isn't one cause for obesity, there won't be one solution for it, either.

If you choose not to obtain the consent of your doctor or work with them whilst using any of the information contained herein, you're agreeing to take full responsibility for this - but with all that said...

Good luck!