

Beth Feraco Fitness

How to Lose Fat After 40 And Keep It Off..

By Beth Wilkas Feraco



My 40's Fat Loss Journey..

Do you feel that since you've hit 40 it's utterly impossible to lose weight? That you've tried everything and nothing works? Do you think it must be your hormones or some medical issue?

I too have been there and can relate. I was sure there was something wrong with my hormones. At 42 years old I was the biggest I had ever been in my adult life. I blamed my weight gain on being an older mom, (I had my son at 40) and my hormones. I went so far as to get my hormones tested and when they came back normal I was shocked. I thought I was doing EVERYTHING right. I was eating healthy, walking, going to Zumba, and even hiking.

Meanwhile I was also drinking a bottle of wine or more every night, eating more because I was drinking alcohol and compromising my sleep.

Finally, the day arrived when enough was enough! I decided the first and most important step was to quit drinking. I was drinking daily and had made several attempts to quit before but was determined that this time would be different.

I decided to go to my first AA meeting and attended everyday for a year and never looked back. I am incredibly proud to say I'm now 5 years sober!!!!

At the very beginning of my sobriety I met a woman named Allison who was starting a 5:30 am boot camp outside every morning. I joined her group and attended my AA meetings everyday right after. Little did I know this was the start of something great. Allison is a runner so of course we did a lot of running and my love for running was born! I proceeded to run my first 5k, 10k first ½ marathon and even climbed Mt. Katahdin (the highest Mt. in Maine) for the very first time! I will also be running my first marathon in May of 2021! Allison and I became very good friends and I'm grateful for her willingness to push me past my comfort zone all the time because she saw something in me I didn't yet see in myself.

During this time weightloss was minimal. I was eating healthy and was running all the time so how could I not be losing weight? Allison ended up getting a job coaching at a gym an hour away and our early morning meet ups were soon a distant memory. What would I do?

A gym opened up right in town a few blocks away and my son just started preschool so I decided to get a gym membership there. I went to the 6:00 am class 5 days a week and was also still running.

All my hard work and yet, still the scale wasn't moving. Long story short I ended up working at the gym part time at the front desk. I was then asked if I would like to become a Coach and start teaching classes! I excitedly accepted and began interning there while also pursuing my Certification in Fitness Nutrition.

During my Nutrition course I decided to join a group called the Inner Circle, started by my mentor Jordan Syatt. I was determined to figure out how to lose weight while also learning how to help others in the same boat as me. This was the beginning of my fat loss journey.

I began a program called the 90 Day Unicorn Strong Challenge, which is a strength program with Nutritional Guidelines. We were to figure out our deficit calories and track them in an app, along with weighing out our food on a food scale and weighing ourselves daily.

“Holy Shit”, I thought. “I have been eating too much food. My portions were way off.” This was mind blowing. I became consistent with the protocols and started losing weight. I must have lost 8 plus pounds that first 90 days. I lost about 20 pounds total that year. I focused all my meals on protein and whole foods while still enjoying pizza and donuts from time to time! As long as you eat in a calorie deficit you will lose weight! I was strength training, eating a bit less, moving more and sleeping better! It was not because I was in my 40’s.

While our metabolism does slow down as we age we can still lose weight if we are in a calorie deficit. The thing is when we head into our 40’s we are eating more, drinking more, moving less and lacking in sleep. All these added up are a recipe for weight gain.

I am 47 and am in now the best shape of my life. I am going to walk you through some important steps that will help you achieve weight loss over 40 (even if you are not 40) and keep it off!

Here is the first and most important one...

#1 CALORIE DEFICIT...



A calorie deficit is the number one tool in the fat loss toolbox and the most important part of fat loss!

What is a calorie deficit?

A calorie deficit is any shortage in the amount of calories consumed relative to the amount of calories required for maintaining your current body weight (energy homeostasis).

A deficit can be created by reducing input/ calories consumed. Also known as lowering food intake. As the calories required for energy homeostasis decreases (maintenance) your mass decreases. In a nutshell eat less food than your body needs to maintain its current weight, you lose weight. Eat more than your body needs to maintain its current weight ,you gain weight. You could be eating the healthiest food in the world but if you're eating too many calories you will not lose weight.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY DEFICIT CALORIES ARE?

You first want to determine your goal body weight. **Make sure this number is realistic.** If you have more than 20 - 30 pounds to lose don't pick a goal weight that is more than that. Start with a 20 - 30 pound loss and adjust when you hit that weight.

For example: say you weigh 200 pounds, use 170 lbs rather than 130

Take your GOAL BODY WEIGHT and multiply by 12

Example $150 \times 12 = 1800$ kcals

Now to give yourself some flexibility you can create a calorie range by doing the following:

- Take your calorie target and subtract 100
- Take your calorie target and add 100

Aim to eat between 1700 - 1900 calories daily

Remember this is just an estimate and not set in stone.

Stick with it for at least 30 days consistently before you say it's not working.

Tracking your calories and weighing out your portions

You will need to download a Food tracker app like My Fitness Pal or Lose It on your Smartphone or computer. You will enter your deficit calories like the picture below in your app. This is from My Fitness Pal other and other apps may look different. Then enter your food in the app throughout the day.

Whatever you do **DO NOT** add calories back from exercise to the app. Turn that feature off! Your fit bit or step tracker does not know how many calories you burn and is **wrong 50 -85 %** of the time. Because calorie deficit is #1 for fat loss we don't need to use exercise to burn off the food we ate. It's inefficient. It takes 5 minutes to eat 500 calories and almost an hour to burn 500 calories!

Calories Remaining ⋮

1,700 - 0 + 0 = 1,700
Goal Food Exercise Remaining

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It is important when first starting out to measure or weigh your food on a scale. It creates awareness of portions and how much you are actually eating. It is also the most accurate. As you can see from this photo that eyeballing and actually weighing can make a big difference in calories and over time that can add up!

Measuring your portions



1 Tablespoon
95 calories

Eyeballing portions



Little over a
tablespoon
about 100 calories

You don't have to count calories but calories always count! Fat loss doesn't have to be hard. It's only hard if we make it that way.

Eat Nutrient dense foods most of the time and fun foods 20% of the time.

Things to remember:

Protein recommendations range from as low as 0.5g/1b (to basically keep you alive) and as high as 1.2g/1b. It can be hard initially, to increase your protein intake, so to be optimal, use this following calculation:

Take your GOAL BODY WEIGHT and multiply by 0.8 - 1

Example $150 \times 0.8 = 120$ or $150 \times 1 = 150$

Your minimum daily protein target is

120 grams - 150 grams

Get into the habit of eating at least 25 - 35 grams of protein per meal. This will make hitting your protein target a lot easier.

3 STRENGTH TRAINING



Strength training is where the real magic happens! You can do cardio till the cows come home but strength training is where you will see body composition changes. As we approach the age of 50, strength training is crucial for maintaining the ability to have an active lifestyle. By the time you are 70, you may lose more than half of your muscle tone unless you start a weight training program.

Menopause adds more complications as lower estrogen amounts increase your appetite. Lifting weights may counteract the impact on your body with its loss of estrogen.

BENEFITS OF STRENGTH TRAINING AS WE AGE

- **Improves bone density** and prevents possible fractures. By stressing your bones, strength training can increase bone density and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- **Promotes lean body mass** which pretty much decreases as we age. If you don't incorporate strength training to your routine, lean body mass declines and a fatter body takes its place.
- **Improves your mood.** Reduces anxiety, stress and improves our self esteem. You start to feel like you can accomplish anything! You gain confidence at a time in your life where it all can seem so overwhelming.
- **Burns more calories.** By building muscle, you will not only look great but increase your metabolism and help your body to burn more calories efficiently (even at rest)

The benefits to strength training are endless. You can train 2,3,4 or 5 days a week. However how many days you workout depends on your schedule and what you can stick to. If possible join a gym that offers small group classes, personal training or an online coach that can program you strength workouts that you can progressively overload in. Simply put, in order to build muscle and get stronger, you must continually make your muscles work harder than they are used to.

4 Sleep



Sleep is more important for weight loss than people understand. The recommended sleep duration for adults is seven to nine hours a night, but many people often sleep far less. Research has shown that sleeping less than the recommended amount is linked to having greater body fat, increased risk of obesity and can influence how easily you lose weight.

Sleep influences two important appetite hormones in the body - leptin and ghrelin.

Leptin is a hormone that decreases appetite. Ghrelin is a hormone that increases appetite. A lack of sleep disrupts the normal regulation of these hormones. It's tough for you to know whether you are legitimately hungry when your hormones aren't working properly.

Lack of sleep leads to poor food choices and overeating. It also makes it less likely to move our bodies. You may find you skip workouts more or just perform poorly at the gym.

Establish a night time routine that may help you get more sleep.

- Disconnect from all computer devices at least an hour before bed.

- Read a book
- Make some tea.
- Take a hot bath.
- Stop drinking caffeine by noon.
- Avoid light disruption, make sure your bedroom is pitch black
- Be mindful of alcohol, try to limit intake

Sleep is as essential as diet and exercise so make it a priority!

5 Walk



Walking is the most underutilized exercise on the planet. It's low impact and most everyone can do it. You should aim to get at least 8- 10,000 steps a day. Unfortunately we don't move our bodies enough. As we age we get busier and our priorities shift. We are either sitting at a desk all day or on the couch watching Netflix. Want to lose weight and keep it off? WALK!

Walking will help you increase your NEAT (Non Exercise Activity Thermogenesis) This is the energy expended for everything we do when we're not sleeping or exercising. mowing the lawn, walking up a flight of stairs, vacuuming, sweeping the floor or fidgeting while sitting at your desk. They all burn calories, and more than you would expect.

Walking can decrease anxiety or depression, help maintain a healthy weight, decrease and manage various conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Ways to get more steps in your day:

- Park far from the entrance of the grocery store
- Take the stairs
- Walk during your lunch break at work
- Walk before or after work
- Put your shoes on and WALK!!

6 Consistency



This is by far the biggest key to losing weight and keeping it off besides calorie deficit. Being consistent doesn't mean being perfect. It means you don't let one "bad" day turn into 7. It means you keep going even when you think it's not working. It means you build new habits each week. It means you never give up. It means you don't put in C effort and expect A+ results. It means day in and day out you are putting forth effort to better your health. It doesn't mean you are perfect with your nutrition 1 week and then great the next and off again the next week and perfect again. You need to be consistent. You can't say it isn't working if you aren't consistent.

Keep a consistency calendar..



Get a calendar. A real one. One you can write on. Get a red marker and a black marker. At the end of every day if you hit your deficit calories and protein cross the day off with a big red X. If you went over your calories and didn't hit your protein goal put a big black O on the day. If you have more O's than X's you are not being consistent. If you have more than 5 O's a month you are less than 80% consistent. Is that inherently bad? No not necessarily. Progress not perfection. This will give you a visual of how consistent you are. Just be honest with yourself. You are only

hurting yourself if you are not. Keep a consistency calendar each month. It's such an eye opener and creates awareness!

7 Patience and Creating a Healthy Relationship with the Scale..



This is an actual screen shot of my weight loss fluctuations during one of my fat loss phases. This is how fat loss works. The scale will go up and down. You cannot let the daily scale fluctuations derail you from your goal. Notice the overall downward trend? That's what you are looking for. Also notice this is over the course of 3 months? Yeah this shit takes TIME! A Lot of time.

There are many reasons the scale will spike and here are a few..

- Drinking more water.. For every 8 ounces of water you drink that's a pound! Eating more carbohydrates also causes a bit of extra water weight NOT FAT.. Always weigh yourself after you pee and please don't be afraid of carbohydrates! Those aren't your problem
- Stress.. Causes a hormonal response elevating cortisol, which will actually cause your weight to spike. Also when we are stressed we tend to eat more or maybe drink, causing us to make bad choices and overeating. Thus extra food in the stomach. NOT FAT
- More salt.. When we eat more sodium the body tends to hold on to extra water.. So say you had a bunch of tortilla chips, Chinese food, or pizza. The next day you can expect the scale to spike due to the extra sodium in that food. Again NOT FAT.
- You have to poop. If you weighed yourself before you dropped a dooky, you can expect a spike in the scale from all the waste in your gut! NOT FAT
- Hormonal fluctuations.. Some women the week of and during their cycle can hold onto anywhere from 3-7 pounds of water weight! Yup!! NOT FAT..
- Weighing after eating or drinking.. Best time to weigh yourself is in the morning when you wake up at the same time everyday before you eat or drink.. If you have breakfast and coffee the scale for obvious reasons will spike!! NOT FAT

Track your weight daily in the same app you track your food. This way you can see the daily weight fluctuations and the trend on the graph. Using the scale as DATA is key!! You look at Day 1 weigh in then day 30 weigh in and compare! This is a science not a moral debate on self worth. The beginning of a healthy relationship with the scale starts with understanding your weight will fluctuate.

This my friends is how I lost over 30 plus pounds over the course of 3 years. No special diets, no detox teas, no restriction of my favorite food, and no excessive cardio.

Calorie deficit, consistency, strength training, protein, walking and patience!! I still ate pizza and donuts! Don't give up before the magic happens. You will think it's not working. It will take longer than you think. You will get fucking pissed! Just don't give up! You are always one meal away from being back on track!! Don't let one bad day turn into weeks or months. Pick up where you left off and keep going.

YOU GOT THIS!

REMEMBER... **You will not be motivated everyday.** In fact there will be days maybe weeks where you don't want to workout or meal prep another day! Motivation is a fucking LIE! You need to do the things that you know you need to do even when you don't want to do them.

ACTION > RESULTS > MOTIVATION.

WE CAN DO HARD THINGS

Love, Coach Beth