

Chapter 17: Weight Loss Stalls

First let us give a definition of a weight-loss stall. This is the lack of weight loss over a period of 4 to 12 weeks (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9ibLC9DWel>). It can be influenced by such things such as exercise, diet, sleep and stress to name a few. A normal amount of weight loss is approximately 1/2 pound to 2 pounds per week. Many people have too high of an expectation on weight loss. After initial loss of water weight, they expect to continue weight loss at the same rate.

Weight loss stalls can be frustrating. They can occur for many reasons. As you read through this chapter, read each of the possible causes and reflect on whether it is possible that they may be influencing your weight loss stall.

1. Calories are restricted too much: Some people experience a weight loss stall because they're restricting calories too much. The body senses this goes into "starvation mode". Clinicians will refer to this conservation of calories by the body as a decrease in total daily body energy expenditure. Remember, with therapeutic carbohydrate restriction we don't count or restrict calories initially. The theory is, the higher fat content of the diet will slowly, naturally, decrease the amount of food you eat. You slowly become satiated earlier and earlier. If the weight loss stall is encountered, the use of a ketocalculator can help (<https://www.ruled.me/keto-calculator/>). For some, it can be helpful to consult the calculator every month or so with every 10 pounds lost. In this way you reduce your calorie deficit by small increments so as to not to trigger the bodies "starvation mode".

2. Change in body composition: Some people who begin TCR also start exercising. After their initial weight loss due to water loss, they stop losing weight primarily because they are gaining muscle mass or weight at the same time they are losing fat. These individuals should notice changes in how their clothes fit or their waist circumference. This is a good thing! Things will eventually stabilize and they will become leaner.
3. Not eating the proper macronutrient percentage: Some individuals are not eating a low carb diet even though they believe they are. These individuals may be eating too much protein. Even though protein does not increase insulin as much as carbohydrates, they never the less can increase the insulin preventing fat mobilization and weight loss. Eating too little protein decreases muscle mass, but eating too much may increase insulin and decrease fat burning.
4. Food sensitivities. Some individuals have food sensitivities. The most common offender are dairy products. Many people, when they include dairy, will experience a weight loss stall. Some are just eating too much of their daily allotment of calories with things such as heavy whipping cream and high fat cheeses. Try excluding dairy products for a month and see what happens. Also, be on the lookout for hidden gluten found in low-carb, processed foods.
5. Some people are just too stressed: Perhaps they're burning the candle at both ends. Perhaps they've got untreated sleep apnea. Increased stress from a hectic lifestyle or the presence of sleep apnea causes an increase in cortisol which increases insulin, which decreases fat burning.

6. Some folks snack too much. Snacking takes the body out of the fasting mode. Fat burning ceases. Another possibility, perhaps they are eating too many nuts or too much chocolate or drinking too much alcohol. Everybody who experiences a weight loss stall ought to go back to tracking calories and macros to make sure they're adhering to a reasonable caloric intake and the proper amounts of macro nutrients (70% fat, 20% proteins and less than 10% carbs).
7. Some people are just not sleeping enough. Either they have sleep apnea and aren't using their CPAP machine, or perhaps they have sleep apnea and don't realize it. Perhaps their schedule is such that they are unable to get an adequate amount of sleep. Adequate sleep is essential for weight loss and improving health. Again, inadequate sleep increases the stress hormones which increases insulin.
8. Some people are straying off the low carb path. They are allowing "carb creep". This is where people begin including items in their diet that have "hidden carbs" in them. Processed foods are particularly likely to include hidden carbs and sugars. Maybe it is the barbecue sauce you are using. Or, maybe it is the spaghetti sauce. It is important to scrutinize food labels. Some individuals may be eating too many 'healthy sugars' such as brown sugar, honey, etc. finally, some individuals may be allowing too many cheat meals or even cheat days. Remember, this is a marathon and not a sprint. The frequent intake of carbohydrates increases insulin and decreases fat mobilization and can sabotage your efforts at weight loss.

9. Hidden medical conditions: Some individuals may have a hidden medical condition. It's generally a good idea to have a thorough check up from their primary care physician as they initiate TCR. Such a workup generally includes a number of laboratory studies to make sure they don't have a B12 deficiency, vitamin D deficiency or hypothyroidism.

Chapter Summary

- A weight loss stall is the lack of weight loss over a period of 4 to 12 weeks.
- Restricting calories too much causes the body to conserve energy by going into "starvation mode".
- Make sure you were eating the correct percentages of the macronutrients.
- Try eliminating dairy products for a month.
- Stress can prevent weight loss.
- Eating too frequently by allowing snacks can prevent weight loss.
- Lack of good quality sleep can prevent weight loss.
- Read the labels, carbohydrates can be hidden in some of the processed foods we purchase.
- A comprehensive medical check up may identify hidden medical conditions that prevent weight loss.

Resources