



Did Someone Say Cheat Meal?

When we hear the word “cheat meal,” most coaches would agree, that a cheat meal is a food or a meal that’s simply not on the plan. It’s a food that you crave, and having it outside of your plan may not work towards your physique goals. While this is true, a cheat meal deserves more explanation, so here goes...

There are two factors involved when considering having a cheat meal; a psychological and a physiological factor. The psychological factor is that mental break needed after days or weeks of not deviating from a nutrition plan. When your body is at that breaking point, then it is the right time to have a cheat meal. The physiological aspect is when your body (specifically your hormones) need a boost in certain macro and micro nutrients. (Note that I did not say eat all the calories you want!) Having a cheat meal to specifically boost nutrients your body needs, will signal the body that it’s not dieting too fast, that you are

night. For those doing more of a lifestyle program it’s perfectly fine. However for those wanting to change their bodies in a specific time period, the timing of a cheat meal plays a significant role in determining the benefits it may provide and based on a number of factors for each individual, may need to happen more or less frequently than every 7 days.

In addition, the type of foods you eat for a cheat meal is directly related to determining the benefits, if any the cheat meal provides towards maximizing and accelerating the progress towards your goal.

A common problem I see, is how often people will backslide due to the “cheat meal” they ate. Not only are they making bad choices, but the cheat meal provided little to no health and/or physiological benefits. Ideally, you want to feel better after having a cheat meal because you provided your body with certain nutrients. Instead,

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not going into a famine and that there is no need to slow down fatty acid oxidation because you are not starving. When done right, a cheat meal can not only speed up metabolism, but create an anabolic environment for a certain window of time. During the off-season or a maintenance program, where there is no energy deficit, a cheat meal could be used strategically to help a lagging body part and maximize training.

How many cheat meals can I have? Is one per week the rule of thumb? The answer varies depending on the individual’s response to the nutrition plan, the amount of energy used, training intensity, dieting methods and other factors such as timing. Most people want to have a weekly cheat meal on Saturday night social time or date

many people feel digestive discomfort, mental fog, drop in energy, restless sleep, and a slowed digestion. So the next time you’re dreaming about your cheat meal, remember is that food is not going out of style, you can always have more later and you need to remember why you started your journey, food will always be there and you will have more later, and finally, as cliché as this may be, food is fuel and when you make it a good fuel, it goes a long way!

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Don't Cheat Yourself

by Rachel Payne

If you've ever been on a nutrition plan of any sort, most likely, you really look forward to a cheat meal. A cheat meal being this sort of built-in reward for sticking to your plan all week long, while also allowing you to have some normalcy in life where you can socialize without restrictions with family and friends. But does this really work? In my experience, I feel like you work all week long so you can splurge one meal on the weekend, and many times that one meal extends to one day or the whole weekend. The result - you kind of just maintain where you are losing and gaining the same few pounds in a pattern that never moves towards progress. But you feel like you deserve the reward, and in fact you worked hard for it - so how in the world can you have your cake and eat it too?

My advice is to indulge in foods with flavor allowing you to satisfy your cravings and still make better choices. Having the desire to naturally want to choose the foods that make you feel your best without feeling deprived is the ultimate goal and a true lifestyle transformation! Getting a better body is a bonus!

8 Tips To Help You Make Cheat Meal Count:

1. Try making your cheat meals at home so that you can control what goes into the preparation of the meal. This way you can enjoy the time spent preparing the meal as well as eating it!
2. If you do go out to eat, try to plan ahead by checking out the menu and knowing the best choice for you.
3. Schedule your cheat meal - preferably on a day you are doing a high intensity workout (i.e. legs)
4. Limit your cheat to just the one meal.
5. Have something you really want, but have it in moderation. Portion control is key!
6. Be mindful of what you are eating (the nutritional value), how you feel after you eat different foods, and how your body responds to what you eat.
7. Cleaner cheats will help you make better progress towards your goals. So rather than the wings and pizza, go for all natural, fresh foods, and flavors you don't normally have during the week that you can enjoy but won't leave you regretting your choices.
8. Lastly, if you find that it takes all week just to lose the weight you put on from your cheat meal, then you need to make a better choice for the cheat meal in order to make progress towards your goals.