

Keto 101

Yes, Keto really is this easy



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One-page version

This guide is for Phase One—the starter phase. It's still not complicated later, but this is the really easy-to-explain version which will help you no end.

- Eat under 20g of carbs a day (usually 20g net when starting, but for some people 20g total carbs works better).
- Eat plenty of good food — fat and protein — while adhering to 20g of carbs/day. Don't worry too much about macros and calories EXCEPT carbs. Keep them below 20g/day. (Prioritise the animal protein [i.e. not protein powder]—always start with protein in every meal, but don't panic about it.) Your job is to get fat-adapted, so give your body the fuel you want it to use. Also, your appetite will vary—it'll disappear, then it'll come roaring back. Happens to most people, don't sweat it.
- Keto works because you aren't hungry. Eat enough good food with the right nutrients — fat and protein — at each meal to get full, and you won't need to snack. This helps keep your insulin low, and keto is all about controlling/lowering insulin.
- ELECTROLYTES/SALT - KEEP THEM UP
- Keto is not a quick-fix fad diet, it is a long-term repair job on your body. This means that for many, it is not an immediate and sustained weight-loss diet. And those repairs can take months. This is because your body is healing, and it prioritises that requirement over your weight-loss desires because it's smart. GIVE IT TIME WHILE YOU RECOVER FROM DECADES OF CARB-CAUSED ABUSE.
- The worst meat is better than the best bread, so just buy the meat you can afford—don't stress about grass-fed, organic, etc..
- Fasting is a tool; nothing more, nothing less. Works for lots, not for others. Don't let tools tell you to use it before you're fat-adapted and it makes sense. ([Read more here](#))
- Don't worry about the scale. All it tells you is overall weight. It tells you nothing about fat, or body composition, or muscle - even the "smart" scales.

That's as difficult as it needs to be for at least a couple of months.

My good friend Terence (being friends with a Kiwi feels kinda dirty—but there you have it, keto makes for strange bedfellows) tells me this thing I have described above is called "dirty keto." So yeah, do dirty keto, kids!

[My keto podcast recommendations](#)

Expanded version

This is for Phase One, the starter phase, but in a bit more detail. These points are very general, and don't take into account your specific health requirements/medical conditions. I am not a doctor, I am a (less fat, now, but still) fat old journalist. Remember that as you read these things.

- Clear the house of carbs (if possible—not essential, but if you can, it really helps)
- Keep carbs under 20g/day (vital to make sure you do this). Ignore percentages, 20g is the important thing. Doing this also means don't bother with the piss strips for testing, you don't need them. Spend the money on bacon instead. (Unless you're like my Jewish mate, then don't buy bacon.) Most people use 20g net when starting, but for some people 20g total carbs works better. You'll work it out.
- Eat plenty of real food - keto is not primarily a calorie-restricted eating system, it is a HORMONE-regulation system (insulin, primarily) so don't worry about "eating enough" fat or "eating too much" fat or protein. Your body is unlikely to let you eat too much fat or protein, trust me. And if it does, you'll know it 😊 Prioritise the protein—always start with protein in every meal, but don't panic about it.
- Take electrolytes (or at least extra salt)! Super-important to stay feeling good! It's VERY difficult to overdo sodium (i.e. salt), and it's very important for properly utilising potassium properly as well.
- Buy the meat you can afford—don't stress about grass-fed, organic, etc.
- Track your food intake—this teaches you what is and isn't sensible to eat in terms of carbs, it's great for planning your food for the day, and the accumulated data pool helps you work out why things are strange (and at some point they probably will be). Cronometer is great for this. Data is your friend—without it, you're guessing. However, once you're really sorted with it all and know what you're doing, a lot of people stop tracking. However, they start again for a while if things go off the rails a bit.
- When you eat is as important as what you eat. Eat enough at meals to get you to the next meal—snacks keep insulin high, and this is EXACTLY what we're trying to combat. (Thank you Jason Fung, you awesome Canadian, you!)
- Fasting is AWESOME, but don't worry about it—or one meal a day or whatever—at this point. That can wait until you're fat adapted. Getting fat adapted is your "right now" goal. Everything flows from that, and it can take a couple of months or more (sometime a lot more, but that's pretty rare). Some people on keto (especially on the ketogenic forum) will be on you about fasting being the solution to everything up to and including car repair, but that's mostly so they can mention for the 27th time this week that they're not eating because it's their self-appointed superpower. Again, not-eating is great, and you're VERY likely to use it down the track, but it just one tool among many and it can wait. ([Read more here](#))

- Don't weigh yourself. Or at least, not often. The scale is a lying POS which tells you nothing useful. However, if you're a data hound like me, and going up won't do your head in and have you thinking you're a failure, it's probably OK. So yeah, whatever works. But keto is about far more than just weight.
- Ketone numbers are not an arms race. If you're in, terrific. If you're not, time to get the carbs down, most likely, or start searching for other solutions (see above point about tracking).
- Strongly related to the above point—ketosis is a stepping stone, really. What we are really chasing is lipolysis (fat adaptation). This takes time.
- Educate yourself, it makes the whole thing a lot easier. Education is key to most things, and keto is no different. On a related note, the first twenty or so Two Keto Dudes podcasts are something you should listen to. Richard explains things very well.
- Exercise is great, but it could be difficult early on, and it makes very little difference to weight loss—so don't stress about it if your energy levels drop as your body changes from burning glucose to burning fat. Just ride it out. Weight-loss is a kitchen thing, not a gym thing.
- Keto is simple enough. Can it get complex? Sure. But is it at the start? No. Points 1-7 above are super easy to follow and get you 90 percent of the way there. The rest is details for later on (i.e., once you're fat adapted, pretty much).
- Avoid seed oils (soybean oil, Canola oil, cottonseed oil, sunflower seed oil, safflower oil, corn oil, etc.). Seed oils are the devil. Stick to the fruit oils (avocado, coconut, and olive), and cook with butter, lard, tallow, or bacon grease.
- Try to avoid snacks. Eat enough at meal time to get you through to the next meal. Or just eat another meal, instead of a snack. Not hungry enough for another meal? Not really hungry then. No need to go actually hungry (i.e. real hunger, not just "it's 12 o'clock! Time to eat!"—clock-hunger), however. You'll learn to distinguish real hunger from the desire to eat, and not eating just because it's a habitual thing you do at a specific time will become very easy.
- Try to just eat whole foods - don't desperately try to recreate all your favourite carbage. It's a path that flirts with disaster for many, and eating real foods (i.e., not out of a packet) is MUCH easier and cheaper and satisfying.
- What works for others may not work for you. (Including these oh-so-brilliant guidelines.) And it may not work at the same rate even when it DOES work. Don't compare yourself to others. You do you. We are all as metabolically different as we are different in looks (thank you, collective Eades). And if you're a woman, especially an older woman, dropping weight won't be anything like as easy as it is for a younger male #becausehormones so be cognizant of that fact.
- Enjoy it! This is NOT a restrictive lifestyle at all. You just have to stop eating crap. And that's a good thing for your brain and your body, so always remember that. "I will eat good things, I will not eat crap. I do this because I am a smart, newly-educated person, and a smart newly-educated person does not choose to eat crap."