



Your Health



What Is Keto?

By now, you've heard about and maybe even considered trying out a ketogenic diet.

What is keto and how effective has it been for other people who have tried it?

Before incorporating keto into your lifestyle — or any new diet or workout plan for that matter — be sure to check with your physician. He will be able to tell you more about the potential impact on your health, energy levels and body specific to your situation.

The keto diet emphasizes weight

loss through fat-burning. The goal for anyone participating in a keto diet is to quickly lose weight and ultimately feel fuller with fewer cravings.

According to keto experts, by reducing the carbohydrates you consume and instead filling up on fats, you safely enter a state of ketosis, which is when your body breaks down both dietary and stored body fat into substances called ketones.

Keto proponents claim that this process can transform your body and improve your energy levels, as well.

WHERE DID KETO START?

The keto diet originated from a decades-old therapeutic diet, and has clinical roots in neurologic medicine.

It has actually long been used to reduce hard-to-control seizures in children. Studies also suggest possible benefits in other brain conditions such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

Workout and dietary professionals have started to recommend keto to their clients as a way to rethink the way they consume food, and many restaurants now offer keto-friendly food and drink options given the diet's popularity across the world.

DOES IT WORK?

Here are some benefits of the keto diet as reported by the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2018:

- Many people feel less hungry on the high-fat keto diet and so may naturally reduce their overall calorie intake.

- Beyond weight loss, keto shows promise for diabetes management, with improved insulin sensitivity and blood-sugar control for people following a ketogenic diet.

On the flipside, the U.S. News Best Diet Rankings ranks keto No. 34 in Best Diets Overall. Thirty-five diets were evaluated with input from a panel of health experts. This discrepancy in opinion across the medical community reaffirms the importance of meeting with your healthcare professionals to make sure keto is a good fit for you.

Exercising Safely in the Cold

Many of us pack on the pounds over the winter because of a more sedentary season due to poor weather conditions. In fact, the average winter weight gain ranges from five to 10 pounds, according to a recent report by AccuWeather.

We avoid going outside as frequently to avoid the colder temperatures, rain, snow and ice. While this is understandable, many exercise experts say that walking, running or working out in cold weather actually offers many health benefits.

GET MORE VITAMINS

While many avoid the cold, outdoor winter workouts are a great way to absorb small doses of sunlight. The sunlight can help to improve mood and help with vitamin D intake, according to the American Heart Association.

STAVE OFF SICKNESS

Winter exercise can also boost immunity during cold and flu season. A few minutes a day can help prevent simple bacterial and viral infections, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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A BETTER EXERCISE

Why work out in the winter? For one thing, there is no heat and humidity to deal with in colder weather. Winter's chill might even make you feel awake and invigorated, according to the AHA. Regardless of exercise, studies have shown that being outside in cold weather can transform stubborn fat from our bellies

and thighs into calorie-burning fat.

HOW TO EXERCISE SAFELY

The Mayo Clinic provides the following tips for staying safe during your cold-weather exercise.

Dress in layers. Dress in layers that you can remove as soon as you start to sweat and

then put back on as needed. First, put on a thin layer of synthetic material, such as polypropylene, which draws sweat away from your body. Avoid cotton, which stays wet next to your skin. Next, add a layer of fleece or wool for insulation. Top this with a waterproof, breathable outer layer.

Drink plenty of fluids.

Hydration is just as important during cold weather as it is in the heat. Drink water or sports drinks before, during and after your workout, even if you don't feel thirsty.

Wear gloves. Wear a thin pair of glove liners made of a wicking material (such as polypropylene) under a pair of heavier gloves or mittens lined with wool or fleece.

Dealing with PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a real illness faced by millions of Americans. You can get PTSD after living through or seeing a traumatic event, such as war, a major storm, sexual assault, physical abuse or a terrible accident.

PTSD makes you feel stressed and afraid after the event, and it can impact your daily life, relationships and future.

PTSD BY THE NUMBERS

Here are some sobering statistics on PTSD from the National Center for PTSD.

- About 7% to 8% of the population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.
- About 8 million adults have PTSD during a given year. This is only a small portion of those who have gone through a trauma.

- About 10 of every 100 women develop PTSD sometime in their lives compared with about four of every 100 men.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF PTSD?

PTSD can cause many serious issues, including:

- Flashbacks, or feeling like the event is happening again.



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- Trouble sleeping or nightmares.
- Feeling alone.
- Angry outbursts.
- Feeling worried, guilty or sad.

PTSD can happen to people of all ages. Signs of PTSD may start soon after a frightening event and then continue. They can also start months or even years after a traumatic event, so it's important to be

honest with your physician or mental health provider if you start feeling signs of PTSD.

EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN

According to the National Center for PTSD, there are some therapies that have been proven most effective by medical and mental health professionals, including:

- **Prolonged exposure.** Teaches you how to gain control by facing your negative feelings. It involves talking about your trauma with a provider and doing some of the things you have avoided since the trauma.
- **Cognitive processing therapy.** Teaches you to reframe negative thoughts about the trauma. It involves talking with your provider

about your negative thoughts and doing short writing assignments.

- **Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing.** Helps you process and make sense of your trauma. It involves calling the trauma to mind while paying attention to a back-and-forth movement or sound (like a finger waving side to side, a light, or a tone).

Stick with your Exercise Plan

Many people have great success starting an exercise plan. It's sticking with it that becomes difficult. If you're having trouble following through, you're not alone.

Here are some statistics from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Less than 5% of adults participate in 30 minutes of physical activity each day.
- Only one in three adults receive the recommended amount of physical activity each week.
- More than 80% of adults do not meet the guidelines for both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.
- More than 80% of adolescents do not do enough aerobic physical activity to meet the guidelines for youth.

Busy schedules or poor overall health can make exercise more challenging. Fortunately, there are many tips and tricks to maintaining a consistent plan.

COMMON BENEFITS

Everyone already knows there are many great reasons to exercise. Consistent, rigorous exercise can improve energy, sleep and overall health. It's also been proven to stave off stress and anxiety.

The good news is that regular exercise doesn't have to be all or nothing. You don't have



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to spend hours in a gym or force yourself into painful activities to see the benefits of exercise.

The current recommendations for most adults is to reach at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. You'll reach these goals by exercising for 30 minutes, five times a week.

MAKING EXERCISE A HABIT

Integrating exercise into your daily routine requires the right mindset and discipline.

When setting expectations, it's important to remember the more ambitious your goal, the more difficult it will be to achieve. A few failed days of not getting enough exercise

can lead us into a downward spiral.

A better approach is to start with easy, achievable exercise goals. Use triggers like notifications on your phone or an alarm clock to remind you to get active throughout the day. Before you know it, you'll have a regular exercise routine that is easy to stick to on

a daily basis.

Don't forget to celebrate your success by rewarding yourself. Pick healthy habits or treats that you enjoy as a reward. Write yourself motivational notes or emails to keep you going. Consider involving friends in your new exercise routine to help push you forward.

Add More Vegetables to your Diet



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If you're an adult reading this article, odds are you're not eating enough vegetables.

Just one in 10 adults meet the federal fruit or vegetable recommendations, according to a study published in the Center for Disease Control's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

Federal guidelines recommend that adults eat at least one-and-a-half to two cups per day of fruit and two to three cups per day of vegetables as part of a healthy eating pat-

tern. The CDC's study found that 9% of adults met the intake recommendations for vegetables, ranging from 6% in West Virginia to 12% in Alaska.

Results showed that consumption was lower among men, young adults, and adults living in poverty. The reason these statistics are so staggering is the easy-to-see positive impacts of a vegetable-rich diet.

Seven of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States are from chronic diseases. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables daily can help reduce the risk of many leading causes of illness and death, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and obesity.

Here's how to easily add more vegetables into your regular diet.

SNACK PREP

One of the easiest ways to make vegetables a go-to snack is to make them more accessible when you get hungry. You can load your refrigerator with vegetables, but leaving the broccoli on the stalk and the carrots unpeeled will serve as a deterrent to you grabbing it for a quick snack during the middle of the day.

Use an hour on the weekend to prep and package a variety of vegetables into plastic sandwich bags or small, covered glass dishes. This will make it easier for you and your fam-

ily to grab some delicious vegetables instead of chips throughout the week.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT VEGETABLES

If you know you don't like a certain vegetable, avoid coming home with it from the grocery store. Stick with a few favorites.

Choosing vegetables of the right colors is also important. The CDC recommends you brighten your plate with vegetables that are red, orange or dark green because they are full of healthy vitamins and minerals. Try acorn squash, cherry tomatoes and sweet potatoes.

Take your Legs to New Levels

No one likes leg day at the gym. For many reasons, however, you should be focusing on working your leg muscles while you're working out.

A strong lower body can help to prevent injury and manage chronic conditions such as arthritis and diabetes. Stronger legs can make your cardio workouts easier to complete, as well.

Toned leg muscles keep your body balanced, so don't forget to consistently work on your glutes, quads and hamstrings. Once you appreciate that your legs contain your largest and most important muscles, you can start incorporating fun-to-do exercises that will result in big-time benefits to your overall health.

Here are some of the greatest benefits of leg workouts, according to a recent report by Healthline.

- Build muscle.
- Tone and sculpt legs.
- Strengthen core muscles.
- Burn calories and promote weight loss.
- Improve overall fitness.
- Reduce joint pain.
- Strengthen bones.
- Engage major muscle groups.
- Alleviate lower back pain.
- Boost cognitive function.
- Create an aligned, balanced and symmetrical body.



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- Improve mobility, stability and range of motion.
 - Manage stress.
 - Improve posture.
- Read on for a couple of the most effective leg exercises, and remember to always

practice safety in the weight room or at home.

SQUATS

One of the best leg exercises you can do is the squat. When performing a squat, try

you have the form down, and then move up to get more results.

Once you master the squat, try jumping squats. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and lower into a squat position until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Then, jump up as high as you can and try to land softly to avoid injury. Repeat this for at least 12 reps and do at least three sets, taking a 30-second break between sets.

LEG PRESS

The leg press is highly effective in working your quads, glutes and hamstrings. Make it a staple of your weekly workout to see big results in your lower body.

Find the press machine at your local gym and start by setting the weight low. Sit down and press your feet squarely on the footplate, making sure your lower back stays pressed against the bench pad.

Release the safety and bend your knees to lower the platform. In a steady motion, push the platform back up to the top without locking your knees. Repeat for 12 reps and three sets, taking breaks if needed.

Always remember to exercise caution when you are working out. Without proper form, you can risk injury and may not be getting the most out of your workouts. Seek out a local personal trainer who can help you put together a structured, safe workout plan.

to squat straight up and down to focus the most on using your quadriceps to get maximum results. You can do squats with a barbell, dumbbells or just your body weight. Start at a lower weight until

How to Control Asthma

Unless you have personally suffered from asthma, you may not understand its severe impact on people.

Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs and is one of the most common long-term diseases of children. Adults can also have asthma, which causes wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing.

Dealing with asthma can be a struggle, but there are some things you can do to keep your attacks under control.

ASTHMA BY THE NUMBERS

First, let's understand the broad impact of asthma on Americans. Here are some common asthma-related statistics from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 13 people have asthma.
- More than 25 million Americans have asthma. This is 7.7% of adults and 8.4% of children. Asthma has been increasing since the early 1980s in all age, sex and racial groups.
- Asthma is more common in adult women than adult men.
- African-Americans in the U.S. die from asthma at a higher rate than people of other races or ethnicities.
- More than 11.4 million people with asthma, including



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more than 3 million children, report having had one or more asthma episodes or attacks.

- Asthma is the leading chronic disease in children.
- Asthma is more common in children than adults.
- Asthma is more common in boys than girls.
- Currently, there are about 6.2 million children under the age of 18 with asthma.

WHAT IS AN ASTHMA ATTACK?

An asthma attack may include a sudden onset of coughing, chest tightness, wheezing and difficulties breathing.

During an asthma attack, your airways become inflamed, narrow and swell, and produce extra mucus, which makes it difficult to breathe.

HOW TO CONTROL YOUR ASTHMA

Prevention is the best tool for keeping your asthma at bay. By knowing the warning signs of an asthma attack, you can greatly improve your chances of managing an attack.

Some things to remember:

- Always take your medicine exactly as your doctor tells

you, even if you feel fine.

- Stay away from things that can trigger an attack to control your asthma.
- Limit exposure to smoke.
- Visit your doctor if your medicine isn't working or appears to become less effective.
- Get a flu shot every year to prevent illness that can worsen asthma.