10 REASONS

WHY YOU'RE **NOT**

LOSING WEIGHT

By Neely Quinn

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Hey there!

If you're struggling to lose weight I can tell you from *experience* that I feel your pain. Weight loss can be extremely frustrating and confusing—especially when you have no idea why it's not melting off as quickly as the magic pill peddlers on TV swear that it will.

There is so much *mis*-information out there that it can be hard to know where to start. Often times what you hear might be completely contradictory and have you running in circles trying ridiculous things without any clear direction.

It's for this reason that I decided to create a concise Top 10 list of reasons why most women have difficulties losing weight. Of course everyone's body is different, but for most women each of these reasons plays a big role in the overall look and feel of your body.

Now I have to admit…some of these reasons are **controversial**—especially if the advice you've been receiving is outdated (or full of crap). But let me tell you, as a certified integrative clinical nutrition therapist, *everything* on this list is based on the latest food science information available.

Like discovering that the Earth was round, we're constantly making new discoveries that influence the way we understand nutrition. And much has been learned in just the last few years that has transformed what most women think about diet and healthy behavior.

If at first these ideas seem **shocking**, please have patience and let them marinate in your brain before making any emotional judgments. Approach this guide like a child would: have an open mind, read each chapter thoroughly, and take notes as you go along.

As you digest everything the big picture will come together and you'll understand this whole body approach to health and fitness. There is so much more going on than just what you put into your mouth. Many of these factors touch the core of your being.

It is my hope that by the end of this guide you will know more about your food, how to lose weight like a pro, and how to create the kind of healthy body that you can truly be happy in. (Mirrors will suddenly become your BFF.)

#1: Macronutrients

There's a good chance that in this low-fat, low-protein world we live in, you're not getting the right ratio of macronutrients for optimal health. Knowing the *type* and *quality* of the foods you consume kicks your weight loss up to the next level.

There are three **macronutrient**s: protein, fat, and carbohydrates, and they all perform essential roles in the human body. Macronutrients are the main components of our diet. Our bodies require others nutrients as well—like vitamins and minerals—but these are needed in much smaller quantities, so we refer to them as *micronutrients*.

All three macronutrients are needed in the diet, they each perform vital functions in the body, and they play a huge role in your fat loss.

As a very broad, general rule a balanced diet will consist of:

- ✓ 25% carbs
- ✓ 25% protein
- ✓ 50% fat

As I said, that's VERY broad. Everyone is different, depending on their personal health goals, activity level, and current state of health.

Let's talk a bit more about each of these macronutrients, and bust some cultural myths in the mouth at the same time.

Carbohydrates

If I could choose a macronutrient as the main culprit to all the stubborn, inconsiderate fat you may be carrying…I'd point an accusatory finger at *excess* carbohydrates. I say 'excess' carbs because I believe that carbs in general have had a bad rap ever since Dr. Atkins became a national hero.

But carbohydrates are only "bad" when they're not being used to power some form of exercise or basic bodily functions. If you eat a bunch of carbs and then just sit around, then they are most likely going to turn into fat on your body.

Here are some common sources of carbs in a standard diet. (Not all of these sources are Neely-approved):

- Grains
- Sugars
- Starchy Vegetables
- Fruits
- Breads
- Pastas
- Pastries
- Beans

So if your goal is to lose weight, then you may want to cut down on your total carb intake.

This "low carb" style of eating has been proven to be effective in weight loss.

But not all carbs are created equal.

Refined carbs such as sugar, white rice, and white flour are especially troublesome. They're digested so quickly that they cause blood sugar surges, reduce insulin sensitivity, and spike cortisol levels in the blood, which leads to weight gain and many other potential health problems.

More complex carbohydrates such as sweet potatoes, squash, and all other fruits and vegetables are packed with fiber, which doesn't break down and get stored as fat. These foods also contain vital nutrients and leave you feeling full longer so you're less likely to continue eating more than you actually should.

For a typical person trying to lose weight who's doing easy workouts 1 to 3 times per week for a short amount of time it's a good idea to keep your net carbs below 100 grams. (When I say 'net carbs' I mean your total carbs after you subtract your total fiber intake in grams.)

On the other hand, if you're an athlete training hard many times a week, you're going to need to either explore ketosis (running your body mostly on fat, which I won't get into here), or be like me and eat a lot of healthy carbohydrates to fuel your activity. Those include those sweet potatoes I was talking about earlier and every other veggie and fruit, plus things like tapioca flour, honey, potatoes, and other grain-free options. I've worked with some large male athletes who maintained extremely low body fat levels and consumed upwards of 400 grams of carbs on big workout days.

If you're somewhere in the middle of hard-training athlete and casual exerciser, you'll want to start at around 100 grams of carbs every day and go up from there if you feel like you need it. Or down – it really depends on the person.

Everybody is different, so experiment to see how you feel and the sort of results that you get. If you're feeling sluggish, add a few extra carbs. If you're not losing fat like you want to and you have energy to spare, try dropping your daily carb intake to 50 grams and see how that feels. If you have a lot of fat on your body, typically you can cut down on carbs more than someone thinner because your body will use your own fat reserves as fuel. If you drop below the 50 gram mark you run the risk of exhausting your body. You may start experiencing fatigue or thyroid issues, especially if you aren't eating enough food in general.

So don't go too crazy with the carb-limiting thing. You need carbs! Try making smarter choices and you'll notice a big difference in how your body looks and feels.

Try substituting bread or pasta with low carb alternatives whenever possible:

- If you're having a burger, try to only use half of the bun, or go without the bun altogether and instead sandwich that patty between two crisp pieces of lettuce.
- It's spaghetti night, try using shredded spaghetti squash instead of noodles. With fewer carbs, greater nutrients, and more fiber than the simple carbs of traditional pasta, squash makes for a deliciously healthy alternative.
- Cooking curry? Simply go without rice and include more vegetables—it's just as delicious and much better for you!

Replacing carbs with healthier alternatives is pretty easy to do if you give it a little bit of thought. And you don't have to be some kind of iron chef to make delicious, low carb meals. If you're looking for ideas [The Paleo Cookbook](#) is packed full of mouth wateringly delicious low carb recipes, and they're super easy to make!

Fat

Let me make this super clear:

Fat <u>does not</u> make you fat.

Fat *doesn't* make you fat.

If you eat fat, you won't get fat.

The whole "fat makes you fat" lie is too prevalent in our society, so I want to squash it right now. And contrary to what you may have been told, *saturated* fat is actually good for you and an essential part of a healthy diet.

For years fat has been demonized as having negative health properties and falsely associated with ailments such as heart disease and cholesterol problems. Because of this, foods branded as "low fat" have been sold as diet alternatives for years. But these very same low fat foods are often packed full of sugar to give them added flavor (flavor lives in fat, after all).

But in these modern times full of technology and scientific discovery, it's becoming a well-known fact that sugar is actually terrible for your diet and saturated fat has positive health benefits. Saturated fat *does not* lead to heart disease when paired with an anti-inflammatory diet and if you want to have good heart markers, including blood cholesterol levels, the best way to go about it is to actually cut back on carbs rather than fat.

Saturated fat encourages your liver to function more efficiently by dumping its fat cells, which is good for your health. Fatty acids also help white blood cells recognize and destroy invading viruses and bacteria, which boosts your immune system. Eating saturated fat also increases testosterone levels, which helps to repair tissues, build muscle, and improve sexual function.

Eating fat is also very *satisfying*.

When you don't have enough fat in your diet, then your body doesn't get the signals that you've had enough food. This is why many women struggle on low fat diets because they end up constantly feeling hungry, which leads them to eat much more than they should.

Protein

Protein—specifically the protein found in meat, eggs, and seafood—is loaded with positive health benefits. Like fat, it keeps you feeling full for longer so it's easier to eat less when you have some in your system. It also helps to stabilize your blood sugar, which keeps you from binge eating, and craving sugary treats.

Eating animal protein helps your body develop lean muscle mass when combined with regular exercise. Now, I'm not saying that you're going to look like Arnold Schwarzenegger—that only happens when you consume excess calories and train for size. Gaining lean muscle by eating enough protein will make your body look toned and fit, and the more muscle you have on your body, the easier it will be for you to lose weight.

For vegetarians there are alternate sources of protein such as beans or protein powders, though neither of these sources offers the additional positive health benefits derived from their animal counterparts.

On the flip side, if you're just eating a ton of steak or a ton of chicken, then you run the risk of damaging your body if you aren't getting enough carbs, fat, and other nutrients to sustain yourself.

Mountain men and survivalists used to experience something called "rabbit starvation" when they would live in the woods during the winter and only eat rabbit. Rabbit meat is very lean and our livers don't like to have more than 35% protein in our diet at one time.

It's important when on a low carb or otherwise restrictive diet to consume a healthy balance of fat and carbohydrates to ensure that your body is receiving all the nutrients it needs to properly function. Otherwise, you may be starving yourself, which is dangerous, unhealthy, and in many ways the *opposite* of what a proper diet should be for: cultivating good health and a body you love.

I'm a big fan of using resources to help jumpstart my learning curve when I'm starting anything new. So if thinking about macronutrients makes your head spin, you may want to start with a few simple recipes that have already been proven to help you lose weight. No thinking, no guilt—just good healthy food.

#2: Processed Foods

"Processed foods" is a very vague term.

Cooking, dehydrating, freezing, drying or smoking are all forms of processing food, but these forms of processing are not so much a problem.

The type of processed food you really need to stay away from is <u>junk food,</u> and I don't have to tell you what those look like:

They're often prepackaged in colorful plastic bags and stacked high in huge displays at your local grocery store.

When on the store shelves, they are at eye level so you're sure not to miss them.

But *please*, MISS THEM. These "foods": the Doritos, the cookies, the cream filled muffins, the sodas, the frosted toaster pastries…are made in labs and loaded with tons of salt, sugar, and bad fats. These unhealthy treats are made to be quickly and easily consumed so we tend to eat way more of them than we actually should.

These foods are *designed* to make us want to eat more of them. From their packaging and marketing to their sugary flavor that melts in your mouth, processed foods are a major reason why many women struggle to lose weight.

It's common for processed foods to be crafted in such a way that you won't naturally get full just by eating an appropriate portion of them. You can eat an entire bag of potato chips on your own in one sitting, which may have over 1000 calories, without even getting full because there aren't any nutrients in there telling your body to stop. These are **empty calories** that do little to improve your health and a lot to expand your waistline.

If you're eating good meat, seafood, eggs, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, or any other nutritious whole food, you'll feel full after eating a regular sized meal and be done. Processed foods tend to leave you wanting more and that is what their manufacturers want because that is how they sell more of their product and make more money.

Many large processed food companies actually have "food scientists" who study addiction and *intentionally* engineer their foods to appeal to those natural human cravings. Our minds instinctively seek out sweet and salty flavors more than anything else and processed foods blast our senses with an overload of these pleasurable sensations.

Processed foods also include artificial flavors and sweeteners that have next to no nutritional value and are often unhealthy in and of themselves. For example, monosodium glutamate (MSG) is a flavor enhancer commonly found in Chinese food that lends a delicious salty flavor to many dishes but may actually be bad for your health. MSG has been linked to heart problems, obesity, and even brain damage, yet it continues to be used in foods because it's so addictively delicious.

Artificial flavors and preservatives are loosely regulated, vaguely labeled, and within our bodies once combined there is little knowledge of how they inevitably impact our overall health. Many health conditions ranging from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), leaky gut, gluten sensitivity, and other food related allergies are more than likely influenced by the effects of artificial ingredients acting on the body.

When you think about it, these "food scientists" turn processed foods into drugs, which make kicking the habit a very hard thing to do. You may initially experience withdrawals, but over time these urges pass. It can be hard to quit cold turkey so don't punish yourself too hard if you slip and eat a chip or two, but remember that when you eat these things you are only feeding your unwanted body fat.

Whole foods are just as delicious and much more satisfying as they leave you feeling full and satisfied. Over time your cravings for processed foods will diminish as those unhealthy habits are replaced with newer, healthier ones. They may not have the

marketing power of the industrial food complex behind them, but the rewards of eating right ultimately sell themselves.

#3: Food Sensitivities

"Gluten-free" this, "Gluten-free" that…

I even know a woman who has a gluten-free cat.

All of this has to be pure marketing and shenanigans, right? WRONG. For a lot of women it is very much a <u>fact</u> that when they eat gluten, they have an immediate immune response.

Beyond gluten, though, these are the foods that women commonly have sensitivities to:

* Gluten
* Grains (rice, quinoa, buckwheat, barley, oats, corn)
* Legumes (beans, and especially soy)
* Some nuts and seeds
* Dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt)
* Eggs

Everybody is different.

And everyone has differing levels of immune reactions to these foods. Some are "allergies" and some are "sensitivities", but they're all mediated by your immune system and it's all uncomfortable.

Symptoms of food immune responses include rashes, hives, eczema, acne, asthma, stomach issues, headaches, joint pain, yeast infections, autoimmune diseases, and last but not least, weight gain. Sometimes it's in the form of water retention, and sometimes the immune response messes with your hormones, which then change your metabolism. I've experienced almost every one of these things, and all have improved when I figured out which food was causing the problem.

As I mentioned, many women's bodies start to retain water when they have an immune reaction to a certain food, which causes them to weigh more than they normally would. If you are sensitive to gluten, simply cutting it from your diet can have dramatic positive health benefits including dramatic weight loss.

I almost made "food sensitivities" #1 on this list because of how it tied into my personal journey towards weight loss and body acceptance. I actually lost 15 pounds in the first month after I took gluten out of my diet, without changing anything else. Food sensitivities have such a wide range of effects on every part of your body, and I think it's the least-explored factor when a person has trouble losing weight.

That's why I've been working on an in-depth guidebook for whole body health, specifically targeting this issue. My upcoming *Primal Beauty* program offers comprehensive coverage on everything from skincare, diet, and exercise, to PMS and fertility—*and*, how to use whole foods to create a more beautiful you from the inside out.

I know from experience that food sensitivities can really mess you up, and knowing how to overcome them is nothing short of life changing. That's why *Primal Beauty* will also include recipes that were created with this in mind.

If you want to get scientific about your sensitivities, there are tests that you can take or have your functional medicine doctor administer that help identify them. However the ensuing elimination diets can be arduous to endure and the results of the tests are not always accurate. The best available at the moment is probably the Cyrex panel of tests, which analyzes which foods you're sensitive to and how they're affecting your body. Though these tests are often thorough, their results don't always lead to an absolute answer on what to eat or avoid.

The easiest way to avoid likely food offenders altogether is to switch to an organic Paleo diet. I used to administer the LEAP test to help people figure out their food sensitivities, but I found that it's much less expensive and much more effective to just go Paleo. No more fussy elimination diets – just clear, quick answers. Most foods women have

common sensitivities to are excluded from the Paleo diet, so by sticking to that diet you'll likely experience many positive health benefits.

But if you want to know the *specific* foods affecting you, radically changing your diet won't give you the information you need. You need to be a little more scientific about the process of eliminating foods. My do-it-yourself-program to figuring out which of the non-Paleo foods are affecting you most is this: Try avoiding gluten specifically for a month while continuing to eat as you normally would and see how you feel. Then remove grains for at least a couple weeks, then legumes, then nuts, then milk. You basically have to experiment with yourself and listen to your body closely. (I'm allergic to beef and chocolate...and I LOVE them both but after doing these experiments I realized that they are absolutely terrible for my body!)

Some sensitivities are obvious and have immediate effects on your body, while others are more delayed and can take weeks to present any symptoms or discomfort. A good way to experiment testing specific foods that you aren't sure whether you're reacting to or not is to take them out of your diet for at least one week, then suddenly eat a lot of it at once. It can take time for foods to fully exit your system, so the return to normalcy can go unnoticed as they are flushed out. But once you reintroduce them in a big way, if you have a reaction you'll be more likely to notice.

#4: Exercise

Exercise is a major reason women *struggle* to lose weight…and not in the way that you may think!

"Calories in, calories out" does have some merit for sure. It's just not as dramatic as *The Biggest Loser* makes it seem.

In our society it's generally thought that the more exercise you do, the more weight you lose. This kind of thinking leads women down a path where they end up exercising *way* too much.

I can't tell you how many clients I've had tell me that they're doing Cross Fit five times per week for two hours per day, or they're running ungodly numbers of miles every day, or they're training for an Iron Man…*everyone* seems to be training for an Iron Man these days! And not that this is an unworthy goal—I think it's great—it's just that when you have a full time job *and* kids *and* a commute *and* money issues *and* you're not sleeping very much *and* you're trying to become the Fittest Woman on the Planet…well, it's extremely stressful on your body and you're going to be way more prone to **overtraining**.

The symptoms of overtraining are:

- Inflammation
- Aching joints
- Fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Depression
- Lower performance

Another thing that might start happening when you exercise too much is that your body can start retaining water, which actually causes you to gain weight rather than lose it! I encountered this problem when I used to exercise like a freak. When I wasn't running I was doing yoga; if I wasn't doing yoga I was at the gym; if I wasn't at the gym I was rock climbing for five hours, and on top of all this I was working all the time while going to school. Yet I still wasn't getting the results that I wanted and I had no idea why. It completely shocked me when I stopped doing all the training and the weight started to come off.

We're constantly being told to do all of this exercise and it isn't always what's right. Some women can do a lot of exercise and if you happen to be built that way then go for it, but if you're doing a lot and still gaining weight or unable to lose it then try cutting back or switching to some more quick, high intensity exercises.

Recent research has shown that high intensity interval training (HIIT) is what ends up giving the most bang for your buck in terms of time spent working out delivering measurable weight loss results. There are high intensity interval training routines that take only five minutes—some are even just *two* minutes—that will leave you exhausted and burn tons of fat. Try doing four 30 second sprints with rest in between. That's a two-minute workout that will kick your butt if you really push yourself.

Obviously if you're not exercising enough and you're continuing to eat poorly then you're going to struggle to lose weight. But if you're eating right and doing regular high intensity training for at least a few minutes per day, you'll start to see results. On the other end of the spectrum, if you're exercising so much that you're experiencing adrenal fatigue or other symptoms of overtraining then cutting back on workouts will actually be what's best for your health.

Believe it or not, some of my clients who struggle the most are the ones who need to cut back on the amount of exercise that they're doing. Past a certain point, our bodies start to get exhausted and break down, which can be just as taxing as eating poorly and not exercising at all. Everyone is different and we're all on a spectrum of what our bodies are capable of and what they really need. If you can push yourself without any negative

consequences then go ahead and keep it up, but be mindful of what your body is telling you. Remember that diet and exercise, your fitness overall, is only a *part* of the greater endeavor of taking care of your body and staying healthy. No matter if you're being sedentary or super active, don't overdo it. Find the pace that's right for you.

#5: Sleep

This may be the most **surprising** reason why you're not losing weight as quickly as you want.

It's so surprising that I'll be sure to duck if you want to throw that alarm clock at me. But hear me out…

This may not really seem related to weight loss at all, and, in fact, it's sort of admirable in our society when women don't sleep very much and they're just super-uber productive…

But our sleep has a lot to do with how our bodies gain and lose weight. This can be a hard one for a lot of women, especially if you've got kids, and you're trying to work out, and you're making time to eat well, and of course you're doing all of this while trying to work… but you've got to sleep! Let me tell you why.

When you don't sleep enough, your cortisol levels rise in your body, which makes it really easy to gain that unwanted belly fat. But when you sleep for many hours at a time your body produces human growth hormone (HGH), which helps you to lose fat and gain muscle. So when you don't sleep, you're not allowing your body to do that. You're essentially starving yourself of the exact hormones that you need to get the fitness results that you're looking for.

Also, when you don't sleep enough, your ghrelin levels are increased, which means that your body just wants to eat and eat… and eat. This is the hormone that kicks in to let you know that you're hungry. When you don't sleep, your body overproduces this, so you tend to end up eating more than you should.

In addition to that, the hormone leptin gets suppressed when you don't sleep enough. This is the hormone that tells your body you've had enough to eat. So when you don't have

enough of this hormone, you end up overeating. The combination of the ghrelin and leptin imbalances makes for a very slippery slope into overeating.

There have been times in my life when I've had huge work projects and wasn't sleeping at all, and when I don't sleep, all my body wants is fudge. So all I ended up eating was sugary chocolate goodness all day long because I was tired and really didn't have total control of my faculties, which is pretty much how most women are on a daily basis when they aren't getting enough sleep.

So how much is enough sleep? Eight to nine hours per night, and for most women that might seem impossible but it's what your body really needs. A lot of women are getting seven, six, five hours or less per night and that's just not enough.

Culturally a lot of women might actually feel ashamed if they were to really get a full night's rest like some lazy teenager, but it's nothing to be embarrassed about at all. In fact, you should feel proud that you're giving your body what it really needs. The amount of sleep you get directly affects your performance so how are you going to get that promotion, become a CEO, or a successful entrepreneur if you aren't performing at your full potential?

That being said, it's also possible to sleep too much. Oftentimes, oversleeping is linked with depression or low socioeconomic status, which has a host of other risk factors that contribute to poor health. But typically if you're sleeping more than 10 hours per day it isn't going to be very good for you. Diabetes, obesity, headaches, back pain, depression, heart disease, and even death have all been associated with oversleeping either as a cause or symptom of a greater health condition.

If you're consistently sleeping more than nine hours per night you might want to see a doctor about it. Oversleeping can be caused by alcohol or certain prescription medications, so cutting back or eliminating the use of these substances may help, though you should contact your physician first. Similarly if your oversleeping is caused by an underlying medical condition, getting treatment for the disorder may allow you to get back to more normal sleeping habits.

Regardless of how much you're sleeping, there are other strategies to maximize the benefits of sleep you're getting. Try to consistently go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. Bringing structure to your sleep cycle can help train your body to fall asleep faster and sleep more deeply than it otherwise would. Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bedtime as these can prevent you from getting good quality sleep. Regular exercise and a comfortable sleep environment will get you in the mood to rest easier. Even if it means that you have to sacrifice something else for it, sleep is worth it. Just sleep more!

#6: Stress

Stress: the not-so-silent diet killer.

This is another reason that might at first   seem
unrelated to weight loss but is actually
extremely important.

Some women can't imagine living without excessive stress. They see it as a natural part
of their life, or they might even believe that they function better under stress. But this is
simply **not true**. Just to be clear, I'm not saying that you should never have any stress in
your life. Some stress is good and natural. But when you're constantly stressed,
overwhelmed, and feeling like you have so much to do that you can't even take care of
your own needs, that's a problem.

Stress has a lot to do with not being able to lose fat. Sometimes it can be the other way
around where women are anxious and stressed out so they stop eating and end up losing
weight, but then when they aren't stressed out or anxious any more the weight just comes
back on. So it's not like being stressed is a sustainable way to keep weight off.

When you are stressed your adrenal glands get activated and they produce cortisol, which
is a hormone that does all kinds of things like create inflammation in your body and
unwanted fat in your belly and thighs. When you're cranking out cortisol it suppresses
your immune system, it turns off your digestion, and it turns off your sex hormones,
which can actually make you infertile in the long run.

If your adrenals are working too hard, it can affect your pituitary, which controls your
thyroid, which is also in control of your metabolism. So it's like this big huge maze of
interconnectedness where if you're stressed it's affecting *your entire body*. It's also going
to affect your ability to sleep, which you now know has its own effects on your ability to
lose weight.

And allow me to mention the most obvious reason why stress will keep you from losing weight: stress eating. I can't tell you how many women are stress eaters, including the younger, chubbier version of myself.

Stress serves a natural function within our bodies that's very practical from a hunter-gatherer perspective. When our ancient ancestors were being chased by saber-tooth tigers, stress would automatically shut down every function that didn't help us make escape as efficient as possible. Your stomach stops digesting so all of your energy can go to your legs so you can run for your life. All of your sex hormones don't need to really be working, your immune system doesn't need to be working, nothing needs to be working except for your legs, your lungs, and your ability to get the heck out of there. Our bodies are not meant to constantly operate in this state of dire emergency, yet nowadays we are constantly pushing ourselves to the limits of our psychological (and physical) threshold.

So what's the solution to this? Obviously you need to ask yourself some big questions such as:

"Is my expensive apartment worth me working 80 hours per week?"
"Do I really need to be going to the most expensive clubs every weekend?"
"Do I need to be going out to eat every night, every day, and every morning?"

Money is usually our biggest stressor, so if you can make your life less expensive, oftentimes you can get by with working less, and having less stress.

Also: are you working a job that you love? That very well may be the thing that's stressing you out. Can you find a job that you love and start doing things that are enjoyable to you? These are the sorts of things that you need to be asking yourself. If you're in a relationship that isn't benefiting you or you're always in situations where you're unable to express yourself, then you're going to naturally find satisfaction someplace else, and the easiest way to make your body feel good is by stuffing it full of salty sweet unhealthy foods.

I know this'll sound like a cliché, but meditation has been proven to help reduce stress. I also rock climb to reduce stress because it's a sport that I love. Rock climbing is my playtime where I get to really enjoy myself and let everything go. If you can find an activity that you absolutely enjoy, then it will do wonders to help you reduce stress every time you get to do it. Even just going for walks in nature (or not) can be extremely relaxing, to just get outside and change your pace for a while.

Also, don't be on your computer until the absolute last second before you go to sleep. Anything you can do to just chill out and unplug is going to help.

#7: Caffeine

Hey!

Don't leave yet. We're not done.

I know, I know…you don't want to hear about how your morning cup of Joe may keep you from losing weight.

But if I didn't give it to you straight then my name wouldn't be Neely Quinn.

Listen: be it coffee, tea, kombucha, or some sort of sports energy drink, caffeine can not only mess with your sleep—which we know is important—but for some people (not all) it also has its own undesirable consequences that interfere with your body's ability to lose weight.

I talk about caffeine a lot in *Primal Beauty* because I used to battle with this too…but don't assume that just because Starbucks peddles it on every corner it's safe. Caffeine is a *drug* that stimulates your cortisol and adrenaline and makes your liver push out glucose. Basically it makes your blood sugar rise in the same fashion that sugar would. That's why when you put cream in your coffee it has less of an effect on you because it's sort of dulling that sugary effect.

When you're shooting sugar into your blood stream it's going to go sky high and the higher it goes, the faster (and lower) it drops. So it's going to go up then you're going to plunge down and then you're going to crave sugar, so you're either going to eat more sugar or have more caffeine, which will make it go back up then plummet down again.

It becomes a never-ending rollercoaster ride that's very hard to get off.

Women will spend an entire day battling these highs and lows, and when their body has had enough and wants to sleep…they can't really sleep or they have bad quality sleep which leads them to wake up groggy…which causes them to go for more coffee and continue this vicious cycle.

Oftentimes because people use caffeine so regularly, they don't fully realize the effects that it has on their body. Caffeine has been associated with high blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia, headaches, indigestion, and even infertility in some women. If you're exercising too much and live a stressful lifestyle, caffeine use may increase your risk of adrenal fatigue as well.

If caffeine is something that's an everyday thing for you (or an every hour thing?), then I suggest you try cutting it out for a few weeks. Just stop consuming it and see what happens. There is nothing wrong with a little caffeine occasionally for most people, but if you struggle to function without it then there's probably greater issues weighing on your body that need to be straightened out. If you're using coffee in place of food to get you through your day, there's a very easy solution for that: eat healthy, balanced meals instead of drinking coffee. Food gives you energy, too!

The thing with coffee is that it's a common part of so many people's morning ritual and it's hard to break out of the habit. I totally get that. It's nice to have something warm to sip on the morning to help wake you up, but there are plenty of other hot beverages that you can have instead if you're taking a break. There are even coffee substitutes made from chicory and other dark herbs that look dark and even taste bitter that go well with all of the milks and other things people like to put in their coffee.

If you're looking for variety in a delicious hot drink alternative, there are countless herbal teas available that don't contain caffeine and taste absolutely amazing. Herbal teas aren't actually made from the tea plant so the name is a bit of a misnomer; instead they are combinations of leaves, seeds, roots, or bark from various different plants extracted in hot water. Some herbal teas are high in vitamins, others have soothing effects, and if you're looking for energy, there are caffeine-free herbal alternatives available to give you a boost when you need it.

To sum it up, if you're drinking caffeine and having weight issues, try cutting it out just to see what happens. The only way to truly know how caffeine is affecting you is to test your body by taking a break. At first it may be challenging but give it a week and see how you feel. If you don't want to go cold turkey, I've certainly had clients who wean themselves off of it successfully and without too much detoxing. Caffeine is addictive and there is a lot of anxiety that gets bundled together with addiction generally, but if you can find a way to break free from unhealthy patterns of behavior and reduce stress then your body will definitely benefit from it.

#8: Water

Water is *so* important; it's actually reason #1F on why you may be having trouble with your weight loss.

Water is to weight loss as donuts are to weight gain.

I know this first hand because a few months ago I was trying to do a rock-climbing project and I had mysteriously gained a few pounds that I wanted to lose.

(It's easier to climb up rock walls when you're not lugging around a bunch of extra fat.)

So in order to achieve my goal I had stopped eating quite as much. My diet is generally pretty good and my macronutrients are where they should be so I just lowered the amount of calories I was eating. At the same time, I upped the amount of water I was drinking because I was feeling a bit dehydrated, so it seemed like drinking a little extra water was a good idea. I would add a little bit of lemon juice or a tiny bit of fruit juice to it just to give it some flavor and I would always keep it right next to me.

As I drank this throughout the day it would always keep me full, so even though I was eating less food, I didn't find myself super hungry very often. When we feel hungry, oftentimes we're actually just thirsty - and you may have heard this before because it's something that's been said thousands of times and it's easy to just ignore it. It can be hard to carry around a water bottle and remember to do it, but if it's something that you're actually consciously doing, it will really truly help.

Drinking water helps flush things out of your system. It keeps you from snacking quite as much because you'll feel full more often. Staying hydrated improves your skin

complexion by keeping your body moisturized and also helps prevent wrinkles over time. Since our bodies are mostly water, when we aren't dehydrated everything functions better, you have increased energy and relief from fatigue. Hydrating before and after exercise helps to prevent cramps and sprains. When your body is getting the water it needs you'll just feel better. PLUS, water is basically **free** so there are really no excuses for not drinking enough.

There are a lot of guidelines related to how much water is best to drink based on your own body weight (0.5 ounces x Body Weight in Pounds = Daily Suggested Water Intake). As a general rule I suggest drinking 2 liters of water per day; if you're an athlete I would up that to 3 liters; and if you're an athlete that sweats a lot—like a long distance runner— you may want to go for the full gallon.

I have a lot of climber friends that swear by the gallon challenge. Every day that they are climbing or training hard, they drink one gallon of water and it makes them feel incredible. I wouldn't say that everyone needs to drink a gallon of water every day; you might have to pee a lot if you do that, so start with at least 2 liters and see how it makes your body feel.

A handy trick to help you drink more water is to get a nice BPA-free water bottle and carry it with you throughout the day. Sometimes I'll buy a big glass bottle of Pellegrino and use that as my water bottle until I lose it somewhere. Otherwise, there are metallic bottles out there that are toxin free. Whatever bottle you use, figure out how many times you need to refill it to get your 2 liters in and push yourself to do it. If at the end of the day you haven't drunk enough, you can even challenge yourself to chug whatever is left to reach your limit as an incentive to be more mindful and drink more water the next day. Whenever you get to the bottom of the bottle just find a place to fill it back up again.

It's easier to drink water this way because you always have it right there with you, and you don't have to keep filling up separate glasses that you'll ultimately have to end up washing.

It's a scary statistic to know that water is only the second most popular beverage in the United States *after* soft drinks. Start your day with half a liter of water when you wake up. Drink another before eating a meal to help your body feel less hungry and keep you from overeating. Then an hour or 2 before bed, drink another half-liter to replenish your body's nutrients, helping you to relax and rest better throughout the night. Drink throughout the day whenever you're thirsty, or bored, or hungry between meals.
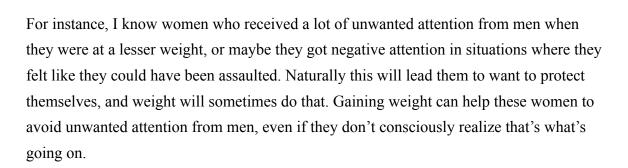
#9: Emotions

Here is yet another factor that may seem like it has nothing to do with your weight but *absolutely* does.

You may even be thinking:

"Oh, I don't have any emotional problems so this doesn't affect me."

But if you really think about it, your emotions and your beliefs about yourself not only affect the way that you look *but* how you eat also.

For instance, I know women who received a lot of unwanted attention from men when they were at a lesser weight, or maybe they got negative attention in situations where they felt like they could have been assaulted. Naturally this will lead them to want to protect themselves, and weight will sometimes do that. Gaining weight can help these women to avoid unwanted attention from men, even if they don't consciously realize that's what's going on.

Another emotional factor that contributes to weight gain is having a lot of negative self-talk—especially surrounding food. What happens when you eat something you don't think you should be eating? Are you saying to yourself, "Oh, this is just lovely. Just me and this box of cookies having a great time together. *Man* these are delicious cookies and I really deserve this right now."

Or is it something like this: "I can't believe I'm eating these sugar-laced cookies. What a fat slob I am. I mean, have some self control! God, I'm such a pig – this is why I've never amounted to anything. I have no discipline and I'm never going to lose this weight. [eats another cookie]…"

This is a real thing. I did it to myself for years – I know. It's terrible to be saying things like that to yourself (about food or anything else) all the time, and it's even worse what can happen next. It might go something like this:

"Screw it. I'm just gonna eat the entire box of cookies right now. I give up on this weight loss thing. I don't even deserve to have the body I want, and I'm never going to have the strength to really make it happen anyway [eats rest of cookies]."

This is actually what I used to say to myself, and these words can be a really powerful force. If you were to just give yourself permission to eat those delicious things you love sometimes (even though they may not be amazing for your health), you'd enjoy the process of eating them and then probably forget about it afterward and enjoy your next healthy meal happy as can be. Which scenario do you want to play out?

Your past can also come into play here. Like how you were treated at the dinner table by your family; or things that your mom might have said to you about how you should look; or your dad being embarrassed of you for being overweight or being made fun of for having a "manly appetite". All of these emotional experiences accumulate and can really start to force your hand into unhealthy eating behaviors…even if you realize that it's a problem.

When I was overweight and 35 pounds heavier than I am now, I could easily say that I was the undisputed Heavyweight Snack Champion of the World. At one point when I was single and in college, I would go and get these gigantic burritos for lunch every day that were probably 1500 calories each and I would eat the whole thing without fail.

If I was sitting down at a family dinner I would go ahead and eat everybody's leftovers. I couldn't let anything go uneaten. I had this idea in my head that somehow I was never going to get food again. I don't know where this way of thinking even came from… maybe it was something from a past life because I certainly had enough food as a kid, but once I got a hold of this and acknowledged that how ridiculous this way of thinking was, that was when I finally stopped overeating.

Over time I got better and better at this and now I almost never overeat. I eat a lot of food, but I don't over eat for my size because of my practice and the sort of emotional investigation that I've done around eating. It was also because I found my motivation to change. I didn't want to be overweight and bloated all the time (eating too much will do that to you). I didn't want to fight that fight anymore, so whenever the opportunity to overeat presented itself, I had to consciously choose: health and happiness or some short-term bliss and a stomachache?

So I just suggest that you try to get to the bottom of your emotional reasons for eating… because we all have them. Figure out where all of these behaviors and negative self-talk come from and try to get to the root so you can put an end to it, or get help for it.

These ideas can play out in your head a thousand times per day and if you aren't aware of them then you may never notice. You have to consciously try to watch yourself and figure out what is causing the behaviors that you want to change. You almost have to step aside and see your life from another perspective to watch what you're doing and begin to really question why. (This is where meditation can be a huge benefit.)

And because everyone's experience is different, it helps to hear multiple stories from different perspectives. If you've got friends or a professional therapist you can talk with to help work some of these issues out that's great, but not everyone has this sort of support. That's one of the reasons why I organized the Weight Loss Solution Online Conference so women can learn from each other and share their journeys together.

There is so much more insight to be gained from our *combined knowledge* than any one thing that I—or any of the many guest speakers—can say during this sort of event. Sometimes if the emotional trigger doesn't stand out for you, just changing the behavior can be enough to make the changes that you need. For example if you're mindlessly eating while you're driving, or eating while you're working, or eating while you're watching T.V. then make a rule to *stop doing that*.

When you eat, decide to have real meals and eat them at a table. Be present with yourself, which can be pretty difficult, so you might have to ease into it by looking at a magazine or something while you're eating. Ultimately the goal is to get to the point where you're paying attention to every single bite that you're eating. You're chewing it, swallowing it, and checking in with yourself throughout the meal so that when you're done and satisfied you'll be able to push the rest of the food away.

Another way to tackle this if you're really struggling with self-control is to only keep enough food to feed yourself in your fridge for one day. Instead of stocking your refrigerator to the point where you may be tempted to snack and eat every time you see it, let it get empty and then just shop for what you'll need on a daily basis to sustain yourself. I know this is extremely inefficient and there are probably better ways to organize this strategy, but the idea is to try and limit the amount of temptation that you present yourself with so you aren't forced to police yourself so heavily.

Willpower is a finite resource and every time you have to exercise restraint it puts a little stress on your mind and body. If you can limit the temptations present in your life by organizing your home, routine, or refrigerator a little differently then it will help you to get the positive results that you want.

Self-control is a real struggle for lots of women (well, for all people) and it's hard to avoid acting out if the temptation is always present. It may not have to be a lifelong habit to structure your life this way, it could be good as an experiment to try for a month or even a year to break yourself of those old routines, but if that's what it takes to build healthy new habits then it will have been completely worth it.

#10: Calories

For some this may seem stupidly obvious…but it's obvious for a reason.

One of the main reasons people struggle to lose weight is **calories**. There are a lot of opinions about whether calories matter, because calorie-counting diets were a huge fad for a long time (often without any consideration for the type or quality of the calories people were consuming).

But let's get the facts straight, ma'am: though the quality of the calories you're eating makes a difference to your diet, if you're eating way more calories than your body needs then you're going to gain weight—*period*.

This is pure science…er, math. If your body needs 1900 calories to maintain your weight, and you're eating 2500, you're going to gain weight.

This is why I think it's a great idea to keep track of what you're eating and how many calories you're consuming by writing everything down. Just for a little while so you can get to know your food better. Pen and paper is fine, but since we live in the future why not go the high tech route and use myfitnesspal.com to log your daily diet and exercise. It's super easy to use, it's free, and when you log everything that you eat it automatically spits out metrics on how many calories, fat, protein, and other macronutrients you're consuming.

Plus, it will even tell you based on your size, height, and age how many calories you should be eating to reach your health goals. These metrics are naturally invisible to us so using an app to make them apparent is like having a super power to actually see how the foods we eat are affecting our body.

All of this tracking and counting will help you understand what an appropriate meal size actually is. Portion control is one of the first steps towards regulating the amount of calories you consume when you eat. Even when you're eating healthy it's important not to serve yourself too much.

It's no fun to go hungry, but let's be real here: we aren't bears about to hibernate for the winter. Food is abundant. It's everywhere. So if you're eating until you feel like you're about to explode then chances are you've had too much. That amount will be different for every single person, as everyone's metabolism, activity levels, and hormone levels are unique. You just have to figure out what is right for you.

So to begin with, check and see where you're at with your consumption on myfitnesspal.com. If you're way over what they suggest for you, try cutting down incrementally every few days so you don't shock your body. Keep doing that – going up or down in calories depending on how you feel-until you get it right. Don't worry, you don't need to count calories for the rest of your life. It just helps to get a sense of what you're eating so you know exactly how much you're body really needs.

It also helps to see the amount of calories that are in food compared to the amount of calories burned by the exercises you engage in. Once you know a Twinkie has 150 calories you may start to wonder if eating it is worth the 20-minute jog it will take to burn that off!

And I know that weighing out your food every time you eat can become a hassle and eventually discourage people from reaching their goals. But over time, as you begin to understand the calories in the foods you eat, you'll know when to put down that avocado or when to eat that steak without having to weigh them out. You'll know what an appropriately portioned diet is in no time. You'll be a food pro.

And I want you to really hear that counting calories forever is usually a bad idea. Compulsively analyzing every calorie that you eat can lead to eating disorders or deep feelings of shame around eating too much. It's important to remember that dieting is first and foremost about your health, both physical *and* psychological.

There is a lot that can be learned from counting calories but if weighing out or measuring food is overly stressful then try not to get too caught up in the details. Counting calories doesn't have to be an exact science. It's just a tool—a very important tool—but its

purpose is to help you understand what your body needs and what it doesn't. Use it wisely and don't let it run your life. If you're really averse to using a diet tracker, just start experimenting with eating less, snacking less often, and taking less on your plate at meals, knowing that you can always go back for more if you're legitimately still hungry.

Just having food on your plate in front of you – even if it is way too much for your body – makes it really hard to say no. We're hardwired to eat what's in front of us so we don't starve later, right? So do your brain a favor and just give it less to be tempted by. You'll get it – don't worry! I did! I used to be a pro overeater. I'd actually have eating competitions with guys. The main thing that's kept weight off me all these years is learning that I don't NEED to eat that much food, and it makes me feel like crap. Be patient, listen to your body's needs, and pretty soon you'll be eating just the right amount of food.

Closing Thoughts

These are the top 10 reasons you may not be losing fat like you want to, and I hope this has shed some light on your personal situation. I hope you choose one or two of these things that resonate with you, and take steps to work on the issue. Don't try to work on all of them at once! You'll likely get overwhelmed and just give up altogether. Just start with the thing that stands out most to you and start experimenting.

If none of them stands out – if you're doing everything "right" and you're still having trouble losing fat, that's when you'll want to see a functional medicine practitioner. Whether that's a naturopathic doctor, a nutritionist, a holistic MD, or someone else, go to a person who has training in functional medicine. That means they're looking at the whole body, diet, and lifestyle to get to the root of problems, instead of just doling out pills to mask your problems like most (not all) conventional docs do.

There are dozens of possible causes for weight loss resistance that go beyond what I've outlined above, and you will find the answer with the right support. I wish you the best on this journey, and I hope that you'll be kind to yourself along the way.

How to Make This Work for You

I created this guide to give you a running start on the path to the body that you've always wanted. Because I know how frustrated you may feel, either from not being able to lose the weight you want, or losing *some* weight only to have it bounce right back.

I've been there and it sucks.

Or maybe you've just found it impossible to even get started because of the massive amount of confusing information out there. There are all these pills that promise you "magical" results, weird exercise gizmos being pushed on TV, and don't forget about the new 12-step celebrity diet programs coming out each month.

And it's all a bunch of baloney.

The truth is, we women have specific physical, emotional, and hormonal needs that *have* to be addressed—that's why I created this free guide and that's why I've designed a free online event for women ONLY.

It's called **"The Weight Loss Solution - For Women Only"** and its purpose is to create a safe and educational place where you will learn exactly you need to do to get the body (and life) that you want.

And, I promise you, what you will learn is NOT about fad diets, infomercial gimmicks, quick fixes, dangerous weight loss drugs, or how to "starve yourself skinny".

It's about healthy new ways to lose that stubborn, unwanted fat on your belly, hips, thighs and butt…and keep it off.

I too struggled with weight loss issues for much of my life. I tried skipping meals, starving myself, over-exercising, taking appetite suppressants — and almost every diet under the sun.

And after 15 years of struggle, I finally lost that frustrating fat and have kept it off for the past 6 years.

Best of all…I'm the healthiest I've ever been.

So now I'm here to share the strategies that worked for me AND my private clients… and I know that they will work for you, too.

And that's just the beginning…

I've teamed up with Paleohacks.com to recruit over 35 experts in the field of health and weight loss to share their experiences with not just their own weight loss journeys, but also their advice as health professionals, authors, personal trainers, chefs, moms, bloggers, and doctors, with one goal:

To help you finally have the body that you've always dreamed of.

What you'll find from our panel of practitioners, experts, and thought leaders, is that weight loss comes naturally when you improve your health, and that is exactly what we're going to show you how to do. You'll learn **how and what to eat**, **which foods to avoid** and even **how to eat well on a budget**. We'll show you what kind of exercise to do, how much, and how often to do it.

And this is not the same old advice that you've tried before, only to end up angry and frustrated.

You'll discover new techniques in the science of weight loss, things like:

- How to boost your metabolism naturally
- How to lose fat and gain lean, sexy muscle
- How to workout for fast, maximum results
- How to get your whole family on board for your weight loss journey (so that you don't have to go through it alone)

- How to overcome thyroid, hormonal, digestive, and autoimmune issues (*without* medication)
- And much more…

We also thoroughly cover the all-important—and often ignored—emotional and mental aspects of losing fat, so that you can cultivate a healthier relationship with food. And, each session will provide you with action steps to easily implement these changes in your life and improve your health.

To go the extra mile, we also went out to some of the top chefs in the US to have them demonstrate some **fast, easy, and delicious recipes that will help you on your weight loss journey**.

And that's only SOME of what we're covering.

I want to be clear that these strategies are doable by anybody, on any budget, with any time constraints — and you can start immediately.

Because you are reading this report, you have already registered for the sessions — which is great! You can access them starting October 21st when you visit THIS PAGE:

[Access The Weight Loss Solution Sessions HERE](#) (Don't click yet…)

HOWEVER, It's important to note that you will only be able to see these sessions for free for the duration of the event, which ends November 12th. Once the event is over, the sessions will be gone.

If you think you will miss any of these information packed sessions on women's weight loss…

You'll want to grab your "For Women Only: The Weight Loss Solution All Access Package".

This package includes ALL of the events 40+ video interview sessions, demonstrations, MP3 audios, transcriptions, and all of the bonuses included as well.

You can instantly download them to your computer — and have lifetime access to the files - so you can watch/listen/read then whenever you feel like it.

AND, we even have a flash drive option, if you have a slower connection or don't want to store all the large files on your computer.

Get your All Access Package Here.

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I'm truly grateful that you took the time to read this little guide that I put together, and I'm super excited for the wonderful transformation that you're about to experience.

Cheers to your beauty, both inside and out!

You friend,
Neely Quinn