

## This Week's Experiments



### **Experiment #1:** Learn to visualize your calories

Get an 9-10 inches diameter plate—that was your grandmother's china plate size—or try at least to not exceed 11 inches, and prepare a meal comprised of vegetables (not salads), a whole carbohydrate (quinoa, whole rice, sweet potatoes etc.), and 3 to 4oz. of meat/fish/poultry or a vegetarian option like tofu.

For vegetarians, I know the protein source is mostly soy based, beans and legumes. Some allow dairy which is a great source, or even eggs. There are so many differences between vegan, vegetarian, flexitarian, and other nuances. But again, at the end of the day, I have noticed a serious lack of protein and too many carbohydrates in my vegetarian clients.

They often come to see me with elevated glucose levels and are borderline diabetic or diabetics. My best advice in these instance is to look at adding protein powder to the diet, even if not ideal. There are many plant based protein available now with hemp, peas, nuts, etc. Remember what I said earlier in food combinations. You may have to start integrating more pure protein in your diet.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Progress Notes

## **Experiment #2:** Learn to work with a calorie counter for at least one week

I know I know, it is not fun to count calories and it is not a big part of my philosophy. However, you need to become aware of what you are putting in your body. Especially if at that stage you are not losing weight or are feeling stalled. I recommend MyFitnessPal®, a free app. In addition to counting calories, it allows you to track exercise and subtract it from your total. I also like the fact you can set your target macronutrient goals.

This is the one I use and recommend to my clients. There are other excellent apps such as:

- Lose It!®
- Spark People®
- Fat Secret®

There is always a new one, find the one you prefer

There are many others but at the end you have to select what works best for you. They all have their pros and cons. But I believe MyFitnessPal® is the easiest free app so far to use and gives enough information without having to buy the premium app. Do this for at least seven days and see how it influences your weight. Enter the data as soon as possible every day. Be creative when it comes to foods. Not everything is in the app database but you can take some shortcuts. When I have a salad I don't know what the exact dressing content is, but I add a tablespoon or two of oil as a surrogate. Or when I have a mixed salad I may enter the wrong vegetables but I know one cup of mixed salad is usually 25-30 calories, so I adjust the servings.



### **Cogni-Tip:**

You do not need to get obsessive with calorie counting, but you must use this as a benchmark to see how it impacts your weight, up or down. And it is not only the calories that count, but the proportions between carbohydrates, protein and fat.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Progress Notes

## **Experiment #3:** The scale game. Understand the impact of certain foods on your weight

This game will throw you a little bit out of your comfort zone. It may even set you back as far as weight loss is concerned. But you need to be aware of what certain foods do to you. And also that your body undergoes mysterious changes that no amount or type of food or diet can explain. For instance, it took me a while to understand that getting my protein from beans and legumes did not sit well with me. I was eating too many carbohydrates. It is only when I eliminated them, replaced them with animal based protein, except for a few beans once in a while in salads etc., that I started to lose weight again.

- One night, when you go to a restaurant, or have a good dinner at home, include carbohydrates such as wine, bread/rice/fries etc. and even a dessert. You do not have to eat everything, just be a little bit more permissive with carbs. See the influence on the scale not only the next day but the next three days.
- For a few nights in a row only have non starchy vegetables and a protein at night. Again look at your scales the next days.

In this experiment, I want you to understand that excess is OK, we have a life, but the biggest sabotaging moment usually is that the weight gain or weight loss can take 2 to 3 days before it shows up. So people enjoy a pretty calorie-heavy dinner, don't see anything bad on the scale the next day and as consequence feel permission to continue to eat freely. Then the shock comes after a few days.

There is an almost contradictory advice I give my clients about the scales. Again, it is up to you. You need to stay in control. So maybe you like to do it every day. I believe that at the beginning of this program, you should do it often to understand how different foods may impact your weight. After that I suggest you go at least once a week, always at the same time of the day. And keep a diary!

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Progress Notes

## **Experiment #4:** Deconstruct a sandwich, a pizza, a hamburger with fries

This one is an eye opener. I am inviting you to either really eat one of these or look online for their composition, using for instance your calorie counter app or getting the information from the company that is selling this food.

Having the food in front of you however is very different and more powerful from a “teachable moment” point of view than just doing it virtually. I have nothing against these foods but they are not what I would recommend as a staple in your diet.

Now deconstruct the food. See how it fits the 50% vegetables, 25% protein, and 25% starchy carbohydrates plate rule. After it's done, and you may have eaten it, reflect on the balance, the nourishment factor, the amount of calories and carbohydrates this meal presented.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Progress Notes



## **Experiment #5:** Each bite matters

This one will help you become more aware that what really sabotages a weight loss effort is not so much the rich and copious, once in a while, heavy meal or drinks. It is the everyday extra mini bites as I call them. I have a friend who is a specialist. She will be at the restaurant with me and try everything I eat. All in all, she must add 6-8 extra bites to her meal.

Each extra bite is 30 to 100 calories. Here are a few example. They are really approximations but I have realized that they are extremely useful at changing behaviors:

- A bite of cake or any pastry is usually around 30 calories but can creep up to 50 calories if it is a big bite of a decadent cake!
- A bite of finger foods, usually when you swallow the entire mini pizza or pig in a blanket at a party, is up to a whopping 100 calories.
- A mini wrapped portion of chocolate is usually 30 calories.
- A mini bite of vegetables dipped in dressing or hummus can be 50-100 calories, because of the fat contained in the dressing. Remember one tablespoon of any fat is usually 100 calories.
- Sampling foods in shops. Oh boy, this one is so dangerous!
- How many times in a day do you sample what you are cooking, finish your kids' plates, lick the remaining cake batter (who hasn't done that, lol!). I estimate each extra bite can be 30 calories as well.

Before you bring this mini free bite to your mouth, stop, think about this experiment and make a decision. Do you really need to sample this? Why are you putting this in your mouth? What is the driver behind having a piece of cake with marmalade at Williams Sonoma® at 10 a.m., or cheese on cracker at Shoprite® at 7 p.m.? Do you really not know how it tastes?

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## CogniDiet® Book Club Discussion Guide

This week was all about becoming more attuned to your body's needs. Participants are always surprised to realize how much they eat versus how much they need. Our society has made a great effort at overblowing everything we eat and not only what is on our plate, but also sandwich, coffee, ice cream sizes. Cut them in half and usually it is still too much.

- **What is your no-exercise BMR? What is it when you add extra activities. Discuss.**
- **Are you using your calorie and macro counter or are you visualizing? Maybe the calorie counter is too complicated? Let's have somebody who knows it well explain to the others how to start and use it. This could be a whole session!**
- **Have you cut some calories this week? And if so, have you noticed results?**
- **What did you learn from deconstructing a sandwich or a pizza?**
- **What about the mini bites? Have you realized you had more of them than you thought?**

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