The Ridiculously Easy Guide to Paleo
Because Eating Like a Caveman Should be Easy

by Chris Hiestand and Chad Olson
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Disclaimer

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Introduction

From Chris Hiestand and Chad Olson, the founders of PrimalPal and authors of The Ridiculously Easy Guide to Paleo

We are super pumped that you’re here! By reading this guide to Paleo you are investing in your health. We think that’s awesome, and we’re honored to represent the Paleo community with our eBook and with PrimalPal, an online Paleo meal planning application that makes following a Paleo diet ridiculously easy.

You may be curious about the benefits of Paleo, such as:

- Increased energy
- Weight loss
- Improved cholesterol levels
- Enhanced athletic performance
- Better sleep
- Recovery from conditions such as GERD, IBS and sinus problems
- Exceptional mental clarity
- Improved mood and decreased anxiety

This is not a random list of results we’ve just read about. The benefits above represent what we have personally experienced or else witnessed in people close to us. And there are many more not listed here!

_We made this FREE resource because we believe that Paleo can help you achieve ultimate health, and it shouldn’t be so time-consuming to figure out how to make it happen._

You probably noticed that the Paleo world is overflowing with information. This is great, unless you have a limited amount of time to search through all the resources and implement the best ideas.

Sadly, the vastness of information can be so overwhelming that it stops some people from even starting. We know, because we were intimidated too. Enter: The Ridiculously Easy Guide to Paleo.
THE RIDICULOUSLY EASY GUIDE TO PALEO

The Ridiculously Easy Guide to Paleo is designed to introduce the essentials of Paleo in one, easy-to-understand resource.

We made this guide for people who want to learn the basics quickly and start taking action. Before making this FREE resource, we found it difficult to share our favorite helpful Paleo information with friends because it was all over the place. So many blogs and books, so little time!

In The Ridiculously Easy Guide to Paleo we’ve done the legwork for you and combined the best information into this simple eBook.

Once you’ve devoured the content, share with your friends and family! They’ll appreciate the simplicity of this guide as opposed to 100 web links or 200-page books to get up to speed.

We hope that after reading this, you are ready to create a lifestyle. Let us know about your commitment to Paleo by 'liking' us on Facebook and joining the PrimalPal community.

We also invite you to join our community of Paleo Lifestylers at www.primalpal.net and sign up for a 10-day free trial of our Paleo meal planning application. We built PrimalPal because eating like a caveman should be easy. Use it to save time and money, and get on with living the ultimate healthy lifestyle!

Good luck on your Paleo quest, and enjoy being the healthiest version of you!

Chris & Chad
Part 1 – Why Paleo?

“In health there is freedom. Health is the first of all liberties.”
-Henri Frederic Amiel

“Time and health are two precious assets that we don't recognize and appreciate until they have been depleted.”
-Denis Waitley
**Defining Your “Why”**

When you're making a lifestyle change, such as changing the way you eat, it’s essential that you take the time to calibrate your values and beliefs. Without understanding your own values for your health you cannot be successful.

We subscribe to the belief that if you have a strong enough “why,” you’ll find the “how” to achieve anything. When finding your unique “why,” it’s important to acknowledge that behavior is driven by the need to avoid pain and the desire to gain pleasure.

Avoiding physical pain is a biological mechanism that keeps us alive. But many times we experience more perceived pain than actual physical pain, and for most people the desire to avoid pain will always trump the desire to gain pleasure. Learning how to control what you link to pain and pleasure is essential to making a successful life change.

Here’s a brief exercise to get you thinking in the right direction:

We recommend downloading the exercise worksheet that is available on the resource website. (Password: ilovepaleo)

Start by writing down at least one action that you need to take to improve your health. It could be cleaning out the pantry, eating more vegetables, exercising every day or planning your weekly meals. Whatever it is, write it down.

Once you’ve written that one thing down, follow this four-step process to get yourself into the mindset of taking action toward this goal:

1. Write down the pain that’s keeping you from taking action.
2. Write down the pleasure you get from NOT taking action and NOT following through.
3. Write down what it’s going to cost you if you don’t change.
4. Write down what you will gain from taking action and following through.

Be honest with yourself. What will inaction cost you in two years, or five years, then the next 10 years? Don’t hold back. Get to the point where your focus is directed towards how painful not taking action will be and how pleasurable the result will be from following through.

**Why do you want to be healthier?**

*If you ever find yourself avoiding short-term challenges and sabotaging your health, remind yourself why you’re on the Paleo journey and recommit to yourself.*
So this brings us back to the original question: Why do you want to be healthier?

Maybe you thought about how your life would be affected by extra weight, less energy, Type 2 diabetes, having a heart attack or a stroke. Maybe you want to witness all of the milestones your children will achieve. Maybe your kids are overweight and unhealthy. Maybe you want to turn heads at the beach or set a better example for your kids so they can live long, healthy lives.

Whatever your “why” is, write it down and keep it somewhere handy. If you ever find yourself avoiding short-term challenges and sabotaging your health, remind yourself why you’re on the Paleo journey and recommit to yourself. Use this “why” to create a powerful and positive change in your life!

Now you can now focus on the “what” and “how” by getting started with the Paleo diet. We’ll spend some time defining Paleo and then move on to implementing the changes that are going to make your “why” a reality.

**What is the Paleo Diet?**

The Paleo Diet, simply put, mimics the eating habits of our Paleolithic ancestors, hence the name “Paleo” diet. Our early human ancestors were hunters and gatherers, foraging for plants and animals. The idea is to consume food as our ancestors did approximately 10,000+ years ago, when they ate natural foods like meat, fish, fowl, tubers and roots, fruits, leaves, nuts, and other plants. These are the foods that we were designed to eat through evolution for optimal human function.

The term “Paleo” is one name for this approach to diet and lifestyle, but there are many more titles and slight variations to each approach. Some people get caught up in a particular brand or term.

We’re not picky about which one(s) you adopt – we tend to use many of them interchangeably ourselves. So whether you choose Paleo, Archevore, Primal, Ancestral, Evolutionary or Whole Food...as long as you emphasize the right types of food and lifestyle decisions, that’s great.

We will use the term Paleo throughout this book for the sake of ease, not because we have some pseudo-religious tie to the term itself.
So why should we try and emulate an ancestral way of eating?

Archeological and anthropological data suggests that our pre-agricultural ancestors were largely free from modern afflictions of westernized cultures including obesity, cancer, and cardiovascular and autoimmune diseases. We don’t know about you, but we’d like to avoid these things.

But avoiding bad future health isn’t the only benefit to eating like our ancestors. Read on for more awesome Paleo benefits.

**The Many Benefits of Paleo**

We can all agree that our health and wellbeing are the foundation for a happy life. Here are some of the most commonly cited reasons why people love being Paleo:

- Usually the first noticeable benefit is just plain feeling better. Most people report having more consistent, higher energy levels. Kiss the daily energy rollercoaster and energy drinks good-bye.

- Mental clarity. Along with predictable energy levels comes peace-of-mind. Some people say they feel like they develop laser-like focus. This can also translate to decreased anxiety. Many parents even claim that a Paleo diet resolved their children’s ADHD.

- Since you’re not eating inflammatory foods such as grains, you may experience decreased muscle and joint soreness. Even after an intense workout you’ll notice you aren’t quite as sore.

- Weight loss. The low-carb nature of the Paleo diet will help you lose weight. Paleo wouldn’t be so popular if it didn’t work on this key health indicator.

- Do you suffer from acid reflux? Stomach discomfort? IBS? Joint pain? Prepare to banish these conditions, or at least significantly improve them.

- You won’t look puffy because your body won’t be inflamed. Hello cheekbones! See Chad’s driver’s license before and after shots for an example.

- Get better sleep. Nothing boosts your immune system and
keeps your mind and body in tip-top shape better than getting enough quality sleep. Many people experience deeper and more consistent sleep almost immediately after switching to a Paleo diet, and the Paleo lifestyle encourages at least eight hours of sleep a night.

• Youthfulness? Athletic-ness? We’re not sure how to describe this one, but we both feel lighter on our feet. Your athletic performance may improve (ours did). Or if you weren’t athletic before, you might find yourself picking up some new fitness habits just because your body is dying to move around.

• Overall health improvement. Many people get sick less, spend less time at the doctor, take fewer medications (if any), and improve their blood pressure and blood work results.

When all these things happen, overall quality of life is automatically better. Enjoy waking up feeling awesome every day!

Who doesn’t want to experience these benefits? Read on for how to make it happen for you. We’ll start by discussing why the Standard American Diet (SAD) is making people sick and fat and then move on to Paleo diet essentials.

What’s wrong with food today?

Agriculture developed approximately 10,000 years ago. At this time the human diet changed dramatically. The days of hunting and gathering were left behind by agriculture and settlement.

Highly populated settlements provided the basis for the mass production of food. As a result, grains, beans, potatoes, and dairy entered the scene. Grains can be stored for long periods of time, are dense in calories, and are planted and farmed easily.

While these advantages made it easier to feed a growing and hungry population, our anatomy is not equipped to handle eating these foods. This is evidenced in the anti-nutrients present in agricultural food products.

Grains and beans, which are a large part of the Standard American Diet (SAD), contain problematic substances that we have not adapted to, such as:
**Enzyme inhibitors** disrupt the breakdown of food and are the main cause of digestive problems. They have also been linked to cancer.

**Lectins** interfere with metabolism function, absorption of nutrients, and insulin function. Lectins have been linked to diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease.

**Phytates** are linked to iron and calcium deficiencies as well as bone disease.

**Gluten** sensitivity and intolerance can cause digestive discomfort. Researchers now estimate that a third of Americans are gluten sensitive or intolerant.

**Dairy** is another relatively new food on the human timeline. Dairy contains two main substances that cause allergies: lactose and casein. Most adults are not able to break down lactose, resulting in stomach discomfort. Casein is a protein that is very hard to digest. These substances are the main causes of dairy allergies and sensitivities.

**Potatoes** contain the toxins **glycoalkaloids**. Aside from this, they are a starchy food that the body breaks down into sugar. (Sweet potatoes are actually an entirely different plant that offers nutrients and slow-digesting carbs, so they do not need to be avoided.)

In the history of our evolution, 10,000 years is simply not enough time for humans to adapt to such a dramatic diet change. Unfortunately, these antinutrients are only the beginning of the problem.

Processed foods, artificial ingredients, and genetically altered foods dominate the typical grocery store. It’s no wonder why health problems are constantly compounding! The “food” today reflects a chemical concoction rather than actual food, and it has become increasingly difficult to find real food.

U.S. citizens have relied on the USDA dietary guidelines for help navigating the nutrition world. But the recommended “MyPlate” is flawed, unsupported by scientific evidence and heavily influenced by agricultural and corporate lobbyists.

You owe it to yourself to become more self-educated and to stop relying on the government for your dietary information. Visit this book’s...
companion website if you want more information about the science and politics behind the USDA and why we’ve been misled to believe we need to eat things that are actually making us sick and fat.

Basics of the Paleo Diet

So if what we’ve been told to eat is actually bad advice, what *should* we eat? Although there are many caveats and variations to the Paleo diet, there is common agreement on the main principles:

1. Emphasize meat, seafood, eggs, vegetables and good fats in your diet.
2. Eat fruit, starchy tubers, nuts and seeds in moderation.
3. Avoid grains (wheat, corn, rice, etc.), legumes (peanuts, beans and soy), and dairy.
4. Drink mostly water.

**Bottom line: eat real, natural, whole foods and avoid the rest as much as possible.**

For added help, visit this book’s companion website for a more comprehensive list of Paleo-approved foods. There you’ll find a one page overview that’s perfect for posting on the fridge as a reminder of all the awesome food that will do good things for your body.

Some people get discouraged thinking about the food that is off-limits for Paleo. We encourage you to reframe the situation. When you get rid of all the junk that is destroying your health, you can focus on eating all kinds of delicious real food that’s great for you!

If you’re wondering about the Paleo-status of particular foods, see the list of resources on the companion website for places where you can get answers to more specific questions.
Part 2 – Getting Started with Paleo

“Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable.”
-Peter F. Drucker

“What is not started today is never finished tomorrow.”
-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Getting Started

Now that you’ve gotten the basic run-down on the Paleo diet guidelines and what they mean, it’s time to make it happen! We recommend a three-step approach for getting started on the diet part of the Paleo lifestyle:

1. Purge the Pantry!
2. Stock up on Paleo Goodness
3. Plan Your Paleo Meals

We’ve included plenty of information to successfully execute on these essential three steps. So read on and get going!

Step One – Get Rid of the Junk

This is where the rubber meets the road. It’s time to get rid of all the foods that are killing your energy and your waistline. This is a serious step but you should have some fun with it. Play some inspiring music and get to work tossing out all the cookies, chips, pastas, flour, sugar, fruit juices, sodas, puddings, candy and anything else that is not on the extremely long list of approved Paleo foods. Take it from the late Jack Lalane, “If a man made it, I don’t eat it.” Thanks Jack!

Don’t stop at the pantry – this also means tossing the sauces and condiments lurking in your fridge that are loaded with high fructose corn syrup, other sugars and chemicals. Recycle old bottles and cans when possible.

Don’t skip this step. It’s best to get a running start and just commit. Besides, if you found a strong enough “why” then you will overcome future challenges. Stay focused on all the pleasure you associated with making a positive change in your life.

Step Two – Re-Stock!

After you’ve taken out all that junk food, it’s time to get some real food back in the house. At this point you’re probably wondering what the hell you can eat!

Stay focused on the big three Paleo food groups: meats and fish,
vegetables and fruit, and healthy fats and nuts. These should be your guiding lights when you’re filling your shopping cart with nutrient-dense foods. Focus on quality; your body will thank you for it.

The Importance of Food Quality

Keep in mind that not all fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish are created equal. We recommend that you discriminate as much as possible. Consider the motto: “Pay the farmer now or the doctor later.” It pays to invest in quality food.

There are several considerations for the relative quality of foods:

- Local is best whenever possible
- Organic is better than conventional
- Grass-fed is preferable to grain-fed
- Pasture-raised is better than caged/crated
- Raw, unpasteurized is best for dairy if you choose to eat it
- Wild-caught is better than farmed fish/seafood
- Hormone and antibiotic-free is a must for all animal products

A Closer Look at Animal Protein

Since the quality of protein is very important, we must understand the differences in our meat choices. Organic, grass-fed meat is the top of the heap for quality. If you are unable to purchase certified organic, grass-fed meat, choose lean meat. Animals, like humans, store toxins in their fat, so if you’re eating an animal that was exposed to poor quality food, chemicals, antibiotics and exogenous hormones, most of the residue from those toxins will be in the animal’s fat.

A Closer Look at Fats

Fat helps form your cell membranes and contributes to new cell formation. Poor quality fats and oils lead to poor quality cells and subsequent health problems. So avoid trans-fats and highly processed oils, such as canola and vegetable oil.

As discussed above, high quality meat has high quality fat. So fatty organic, grass-fed beef is just fine. Don’t be afraid of the fat in high
quality bacon (no nitrate/nitrite, pasture-raised, uncured, no sugar or preservatives added) or in avocados. Good fat equals healthy cells!

The following fats are recommended for cooking:

- Organic extra virgin coconut oil
- Organic grass-fed, butter or ghee
- Organic pasture-raised pork bacon fat
- Extra virgin olive oil

A Closer Look at Fruits and Vegetables

Eating high quality organic fruits and vegetables can be expensive, and they can also be hard to find, but it’s an important consideration in food quality.

Not too many people would argue with you about not wanting to eat chemical-laden fruits and vegetables, especially considering scientists are just starting to understand the long-term effects of pesticides. These chemicals have been linked to problems with the nervous system, endocrine function, cancer and other chronic diseases. It’s safe to say that minimizing the consumption of these contaminates is best.

Certain produce contains higher pesticide content than others. By understanding the “dirtiest” and cleanest produce options, you can make better decisions when purchasing your produce. Check out the Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen lists on page 18.

What does organic actually mean?

The United States Department of Agriculture definition of “USDA Certified Organic” is:

Organic is a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods that integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used.

In short, certified organic doesn’t allow for pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, and chemical fertilizers to be used.

“The growing consensus among scientists is that small doses of pesticides and other chemicals can cause lasting damage to human health, especially during fetal development and early childhood. Scientists now know enough about the long-term consequences of ingesting these powerful chemicals to advise that we minimize our consumption of pesticides.”

http://www.ewg.org/foodnews
This might seem like a lot to consider at the grocery store. No worries, with a little practice Paleo-style shopping will become second nature. You’ll find that taking time to plan your meals for the week will make shopping easy. Just buy the things you need for your meals and stock up on your favorite Paleo snacks.

Meal planning will also make your shopping trips less expensive because you’ll be working off a specific grocery list. Just because something is Paleo doesn’t mean you need to buy it every time you go to the store.

There are a number of ways to be Paleo without breaking the bank. We’re not millionaires, so we’ve compiled the following information to help others make the switch affordable too.

**Making Paleo Affordable**

To further assist you in your hunt for quality, affordable food, we compiled the following Paleo-friendly shopping tips:

**Paleo-friendly Food Shopping Sources**

- **Trader Joes.** This is one of our favorites because of the great selection and price. You will find everything from grass-fed beef to organic produce to Kerrygold grass-fed butter. If your area has a TJ’s, it’s a solid option.

- **Whole Foods.** This is a great option for a huge selection of high quality food. The price is a little steeper, but the quality is reliable. We can’t afford to do all our shopping there, but it’s a nice supplement for specialty items that are difficult to find elsewhere.

- **Costco.** Costco is a membership warehouse club; so expect to buy in bulk. They have a large selection of organic produce at competitive prices. It’s not local produce, but membership makes it possible to buy large quantities of organic veggies on a weekly basis. Costco currently doesn’t offer grass-fed beef, pork, lamb or free-range poultry, so we buy our meat elsewhere. However, they do carry organic, free-range eggs.

- **Farmers markets.** Local markets are a great place to get fresh local produce, meat, eggs, and even cheese. Shopping at your local farmers markets will help you to become in tune with the

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**The Dirty Dozen**

Buy These Organic

1) Apples  
2) Celery  
3) Strawberries  
4) Peaches  
5) Spinach  
6) Nectarines  
7) Grapes – Imported  
8) Sweet Bell Peppers  
9) Potatoes  
10) Blueberries – Domestic  
11) Lettuce  
12) Kale/Collard Greens

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**Clean Fifteen**

Least Contaminated

1) Onions  
2) Sweet Corn  
3) Pineapples  
4) Avocado  
5) Asparagus  
6) Sweet Peas  
7) Mangoes  
8) Eggplant  
9) Cantaloupe – Domestic  
10) Kiwi  
11) Cabbage  
12) Watermelon  
13) Sweet Potatoes  
14) Grapefruit  
15) Mushrooms
growing seasons and assure you that your produce choices are in season. They are also fun! This is your chance to support your local farming community – take advantage of it. Check out www.localharvest.org for farmers markets in your area.

- **Local Co-operatives.** At co-ops you can pay a small up-front membership fee and then enjoy a discount every time you shop. And because you’re a member, you can often vote on where the food is sourced. Depending on the location, you may not have to be a member to shop there. Co-ops usually have a nice selection of high quality, local foods.

- **CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).** With a CSA, you become a member of one or more local farms and buy a share of the annual yield. The food is typically delivered at regular intervals – perhaps once a week or once a month. Just like farmers markets, CSAs provide fresh, in season, and usually organic local food. Most CSAs consist of primarily vegetables, but there are also meat, fruit and cheese CSAs. Check http://www.localharvest.org/csa/ for CSAs in your area.

- **Local Farmers.** If you want local products, especially meat, but you don’t want to do a regular pick-up, find a local farmer who sells in bulk. Many farmers will sell full, half or quarter shares of beef, pork or other products. You’ll need a big freezer, but the investment in a deep freeze is often worth having an on-hand supply of quality meat. Check out http://www.eatwild.com/ for information about local farmers.

- **General Grocery Stores.** Most local grocery stores now offer a selection of organic foods. If you need a few staple items, this can be a convenient option. Regional grocery stores often carry more organic and local products, so it’s worth looking around for your best grocery chain options.

- **Amazon / U.S. Wellness Meats / Online sources.** The prevalence of the internet makes it easy to find Paleo foods at reasonable prices. The internet can be an great place to source foods like coconut oil, coconut flour and almond meal. You might be surprised at what else you can find inexpensively on the internet. It’s especially useful to use the internet if you like to buy certain items in bulk. Just make sure to choose reliable sources.
Even when you go to one of the grocery stores above, you’ll realize that you skip 90 percent of the aisles. Since this probably means developing whole new shopping habits, here are some tips to save you time and money.

**Tip #1:** Don’t beat yourself up if your budget only allows you to buy conventional meats and veggies. If you have a little extra room in your food budget consider spending a little extra on organic green, leafy vegetables. Usually the price difference is not as steep, and you’ll be getting an awesome source of vitamins, minerals and protein from vegetables like kale, broccoli and spinach. Use the “dirty dozen” list (pg. 18) to prioritize where you spend your produce dollars. But in the end, even conventional vegetables are a thousand times better than eating a bunch of processed garbage.

**Tip #2:** Take a peak in the frozen food aisle for frozen veggies and fruits. Usually the produce is frozen at its peak freshness and retains all its nutrients, and it’s usually cheaper than the fresh variety. You can also find organic versions of most frozen produce.

**Tip #3:** Stock up on the incredible, edible egg. Eggs are one of the best sources of animal protein available on the planet, making it a great bang for your buck. The protein found in a whole egg has a protein quality score of 100, which means that it is easily used by the body for building muscle and supporting body functions. Forget what you’ve heard about egg whites being the only healthy part of the egg. Make sure to eat the yolk because it packs the majority of the vitamins, nutrients and proteins. Try to buy local, organic, free-range eggs because the animals were most likely treated more humanely and the eggs will have a greater amount of omega-3 fatty acids.

**Tip #4:** Look for good deals and stock up. Even stores that are known for being a little pricier have sales. Whole Foods offers discounts in the Whole Deal coupon book and it also has Wednesday specials that can provide savings on pantry-worthy items. The Whole Foods Friday special, when some seafood and meat items sell at 50 percent of retail, is also worth a look. When you spot a great deal, especially if it’s on good quality meat, stock up! Good quality meat is easily frozen.

**Tip #5:** Have a game plan at your local farmers market. As mentioned previously, the farmers market is a great place to source fresh, local produce and grass-fed, organic meats. But you want to know how to recognize the best values. A good strategy is to go later in the day when farmers are looking to unload their inventory rather than drive it back.
home. Be fair with your offer. Try rounding down to the nearest dollar or even ask if they’ll throw in another item if you buy something at regular price. Your best bet might be to build a relationship with a local farmer. It’s also a good idea to know what’s in season in your area because you’ll be more likely to find good deals on those items. Be prepared with cash in hand and bags to carry your items.

**Tip #6:** Grow your own food and enjoy some serious savings. This is a new concept to us because we live in a relatively urban environment. We’re currently experimenting with [Square Foot Gardening](http://www.squarefootgardening.com), which utilizes planter boxes and provides a framework for growing in small spaces. It’s a time investment, but it’s been fun getting our hands dirty, and the pay-off is well worth it. In most areas you can plant quite a variety of produce and this will lead to a lot of savings. Imagine if you only went to the market or grocery store to source your animal protein. You’d not only save money on the food bill but a boatload of time as well. We’ve included some of our favorite resources in the [companion blog of this eBook](http://www.paleo-easy.com/).

**Tip #8:** Try joining a CSA, as discussed previously. We’ve enjoyed CSAs in the past and currently have an amazing monthly meat share. Keep in mind that you won’t have control over the kinds of product you receive, which can add a certain level of complexity (and fun surprise!) to your meal planning. However, most CSAs will give you an idea of what is in season and what you can expect to find in your share. It can be a fun way to try new things and build a relationship with a local farmer.

**Tip #9:** Plan your meals, and therefore your grocery shopping, in advance. For some reason meal planning has a bad rap for being boring and work-intensive. We believe planning your meals can be fun when you have a helpful system to find new, delicious recipes. And having a straightforward shopping list to take with you to the grocery store or farmers market makes the planning totally worth it. It doesn't have to take long, especially if you use a system like PrimalPal. Plus you'll save a ton of time by not wandering aimlessly around the grocery store. Another advantage of planning your meals is that you’ll waste significantly less food. Thoughtful meal planning leads to mindful shopping and that equals time and money saved.

**Tip #10:** Turn cheap, choice cuts of meats into prime rib deliciousness. If you learn the proper way of treating your meat before you cook it you can take what starts as a cheap cut and turn it into a five-star dining experience. Over on the [companion blog](http://www.paleo-easy.com/) we’ve included some of our Planting a garden can be rewarding, and gardening is a great way to reduce stress.
THE RIDICULOUSLY EASY GUIDE TO PALEO

top articles and videos for preparing choice cuts and making them absolutely delicious.

Tip #11: Cut back on the non-necessities. We know, we know, we know... it’s not fun to cut back. But hear us out. If your bank account is really hurting, you only have two options: you can either find ways to make more money, or you can reduce expenses. If you’ve exhausted the first option then it’s time to look at cutting back. Maybe you don’t have to buy the most gourmet teas or coffees. That name brand coconut milk could easily be substituted for the store brand. Making small sacrifices can add up to big savings.

You probably have many money-saving tips of your own. If you have some awesome Paleo shopping tips, let us know on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PrimalPal. We love new ideas, and the rest of the community always appreciates tips and resources. (We keep it legit and resourceful on Facebook, so please don’t spam the community. That’s uncool, and we’ll just take it down anyway.)

Step Three – Plan Your Meals

If you’ve made it through steps one and two already, congratulations! You’re well on your way to Paleo success. This last step will make your transition so much easier (we wish we started sooner!) and help you stay on track.

If you visit any Paleo blogs or forums you’ll notice that one of the major issues that Paleo diet followers run into is confusion about what to eat and what food to buy. Some people complain about eating the same foods over and over again and growing bored.

These are the same challenges that we faced when we started eating a Paleo diet, and they are problems that are easily solved with a little thoughtful planning.

Planning ahead ensures that you’re never confused about what to eat or what to get at the store. You’ll be more successful with a system instead of willpower. The meal plan is your map to success.

Choose one day a week to do your meal planning, and consider making it the day you go to the farmers market or the grocery store. This weekly ritual is your plan! With the right resources, including delicious recipes to look forward to, you’ll enjoy your Paleo efforts.

Check out PrimalPal for an easy way to plan your Paleo meals and automatically create shopping lists.
Http://www.primalpal.net
How Much Should I Eat?

To answer this question, don’t worry about counting calories. Instead, focus on macronutrients: protein, fat and carbohydrates.

There is an optimum amount of carbohydrates you should be eating on a daily basis if you want to lose fat. In most circumstances this is somewhere between 50 and 100 grams of carbohydrates a day. If your carbohydrate intake falls somewhere between 100 and 150 grams of carbohydrates a day, you will most likely maintain your current body fat levels. If your carbohydrate consumption climbs above 150 grams a day, depending on your activity level, you could start to enter the fat gaining zone. In our experience, keeping carbohydrates below 100 grams a day is best if you’re trying to lose body fat. Personally, we see our best results when we get our carbohydrates strictly from vegetables and berries and maintain carbohydrate intake at an average of 75 grams per day.

Fruit still has fructose and it does cause an insulin response, which means it’s a bad idea to consume large quantities of fruit every day. If you like to have fruit often, try to opt for fruits lower on the glycemic index such as raspberries or blueberries.

You may need to keep track of this for a while to get a feel for what 100 grams of carbohydrate consumption feels like in a day. The tool we used to do this was My Fitness Pal, which is an online food diary. This can get tedious, so our suggestion would be to keep track of everything you eat for the initial 30 days of Paleo, after which you should have a good feel for your average macronutrient levels each day.

Don’t Forget: You’re Creating a Lifestyle, Not Following a Diet

Paleo eating can be a little daunting at first, especially if it means a real diet overhaul. Take the time to give it an honest shot, and expect that there will be some challenges along the way, so don’t give up early!

It’s worth noting that some people experience the “low carb flu” for their first few days or weeks after going Paleo. Consider it a minor hurdle before the long-term effects kick in, and don’t give up early!

We are convinced that if you give the Paleo diet a try of 30 days you will be a changed person. After 30 days you will notice a difference in how you feel, how much more energy you have and how you look.
THE RIDICULOUSLY EASY GUIDE TO PALEO

Why 30 days?

There is a lot of evidence that suggests it takes 21 to 30 days of repeating a task or activity before it becomes a habit. We all create habits every day but we usually do it subconsciously.

Think about mindful shopping versus mindless shopping. Chances are you buy a lot of the same foods every time you go to the grocery store. Did you ever stop to ask yourself why? You’ve formed a habit of buying a certain brand or kind of food. Most likely you didn’t consciously choose that shopping habit; it just formed over time while you weren’t paying attention. This is the mindless way to form habits, and sometimes they’re not habits that we want at all.

For 30 days try to be conscious not only of the foods you are buying and eating, but also about other lifestyle habits you have unconsciously acquired.

Take it from Ben Franklin, who kept track of his habit development in a journal. Try documenting what you’re eating, how you’re feeling, energy levels and anything else you wish to jot down. If it’s worth doing then it’s worth recording!
Part 3 – Living the Paleo Lifestyle

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

“Happiness is not something you postpone for the future; it is something you design for the present.”
- Jim Rohn
Taking Care of Yourself

The Paleo lifestyle isn’t just about what you eat, though this is an important part of the equation and the place where most people start. There are many key factors that contribute to your health and wellbeing. Living a Paleo lifestyle will help you address these key factors to ensure you’re healthy at a holistic level and not just in one isolated area.

We believe that outside of diet, the Paleo lifestyle should incorporate four key habits:

1. Move Around
2. Get Some Sun
3. Get Quality Sleep
4. Reduce Stress

Move Around Caveman Style

Moving your body is essential to living a long and healthy life. Whether you choose to engage in regular sprint workouts, lift heavy things or just spend more time outside playing, it’s all part of living a Paleo lifestyle.

The fact is, our Paleolithic ancestors did not sit around all day in front of their televisions and computers. They were constantly on the move and they were rewarded with healthy and fit bodies.

Run Really Fast

Sprinting was our ancestors’ natural source of exercise. They had to sprint if they were going to have dinner or survive predator attacks. Though we might not be hunting for our food or running from saber-tooth tigers, there are still plenty of reasons to sprint, including:

- Sprinting reduces body fat and builds muscle.
- Sprinting naturally increases human growth hormone in the body, which is good. Human growth hormone increases muscle

Side note: In 1996, Dr. Izumi Tabata conducted a study that concluded that a four-minute cardiovascular training routine significantly improved fitness. The four minutes of intense exercise was comprised of eight rounds of 20-second intervals of maximum effort sprinting, followed by 10 seconds of rest. Tabata’s study showed that the more physically demanding the training, the greater the improvement. If you overload aerobic capacity and anaerobic capacity to the maximum, the result is maximum improvement in both areas. “Tabata” is now the name of a common training interval found at CrossFit gyms.

mass, strengthens your immune system, promotes weight loss, and increases stamina.

- Sprinting strengthens your cardiovascular system.
- Sprint workouts are short!

If you want to lose weight then sprinting is for you, and unlike jogging, sprinting will not deteriorate your hard-earned muscle. In fact, it does just the opposite by increasing your muscle mass and bone density. If you’re an avid jogger, you may want to supplement running with weight training as long-distance running erodes your muscle mass. Check out our example sprint workouts on the resource website.

**Lift Heavy Stuff**

We realize that not everyone reading this is a gym rat. But in the Paleo community there are a lot of people that subscribe to doing some heavy lifting on a weekly basis. If you’re currently not weight training, we suggest you reconsider.

Here are some documented and tested benefits of training with weights on a regular basis:

- Training with weights will help you increase lean muscle tissue and decrease body fat, which will raise your resting metabolic rate. Basically, you’ll burn even more body fat while sitting still.

- Regular weight lifting has been shown to increase your mood and energy levels. It also helps fight off depression.

- You can actually slow the process of natural muscle loss that starts to occur as you age. That’s right, tell Grandma to pick up a pair of dumbbells!

- Weight lifting can actually reverse the natural decline in your resting metabolism that starts to occur around age 30. If you’re already over the age of 30, it is not too late to experience this powerful benefit.

- You can improve your body’s insulin resistance. This means you’ll decrease your risk of suffering from metabolic syndrome or Type 2 diabetes. When you combine weight training with the Paleo diet you’ll be in complete control of your insulin.
Lifting weights improves the performance of your immune system and helps you stay clear of the common cold and the flu, among many other illnesses and diseases.

It can improve your digestive system performance. Training will shorten gastrointestinal transit time, which means food will get through your system faster and more efficiently. This cuts your risk of colon cancer and other diseases caused by toxic absorption inside the GI tract.

Lifting heavy things helps you sleep better by relieving stress and improving hormone levels that are related to getting a good night’s rest.

It increases bone density and helps your body defend against fractures and osteoporosis.

This is not an exhaustive list, but you can see there are some big benefits in consistent weight training.

The great thing about lifting weights for exercise is that you don’t have to do it every day to get all the benefits. If you’ve never done any kind of weight lifting before you may want to find a good trainer at your gym or sign up at a local CrossFit affiliate. You can always start with some simple body weight exercises if you need to take it slow.

The key is to construct a program that you can stick with and that challenges you. Don’t go to the gym, do 12 five-pound dumbbell curls and call it a day.

Focus your workouts on compound movements. These are lifts that incorporate a lot of muscle mass and generally tax your body more than isolation exercises such as single joint movements (i.e. bicep curls). Compound movements encourage your body to release more growth hormone, which helps you build muscle and get lean.

Compound exercises are usually multi-joint exercises such as squats, bench presses, dead lifts, power cleans, push presses, lunges and a variety of many other exercises. We suggest that these movements compose the core of all your workouts. We’ve put some instructional videos about compound exercises on the companion blog.

We’re not trying to turn you into a meathead or a bodybuilder. And for all the women out there, weight lifting will not make you look bulky! We just want you to be the leanest, strongest version of yourself, and we
believe weight lifting is an essential piece of the Paleo puzzle.

The positive health benefits of weight lifting are too significant to ignore. We suggest you get started and see how you feel. Our bet is that you’ll end up loving not only how weight lifting makes you feel but also what you see in the mirror!

Engage in Low Impact Play

This might be surprising, but hunter-gatherers didn't watch a lot of TV. In fact, they spent a lot of time moving around, mostly hunting and gathering. We recommend you take a cue from them and spend more time moving around.

When your diet is adequately fueling your body, you’re going to want to move around more. So use your new energy to go for a walk, do yoga, dance, garden, play bocce ball, renew your love of swing-sets. Whatever movement does it for you, do it often.

The more you play the healthier and happier you will be. It has many stress-reducing qualities, which can have a tremendous effect on many areas of your life. So play more! Find ways to have fun that don’t involve a remote control. Take it outside and crank up the benefits of a Paleo lifestyle and get a solid dose of Vitamin D to boot.

Get Some Sun!

A Vitamin D deficiency can lead to many health problems, including: osteoporosis, breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, metabolic syndrome and diabetes, autoimmune diseases, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, Parkinson’s disease, depression and seasonal affective disorder; Alzheimers disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and a host of other cancers and diseases.

Scary, right? Vitamin D warrants serious consideration when it comes to your health.

How does the body get Vitamin D? Technically, Vitamin D is not a vitamin at all. It’s a prohormone, a substance that the body takes and converts into a hormone. At a very basic level, the sunlight’s UV-B rays react with your skin to make Vitamin D.

Stuart Brown wrote Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul, a book about how play is as essential to our health as sleep or nutrition. In it he claims that our ability to play throughout life is the single most important factor in determining our overall success and happiness. That’s pretty powerful!
When it comes to getting enough Vitamin D, you have three choices:

1. Get sun exposure every day.
2. Supplement with high quality Vitamin D3 (read the label and avoid sneaky ingredients like soy!).
3. Attempt to get extra Vitamin D through natural food sources like wild-caught salmon.

Our suggestion is to opt for getting the majority of your Vitamin D from the sun’s pure UV-B rays, the way nature intended. When this isn’t possible (like in the middle of a long Minnesota winter), supplement to get the Vitamin D you need.

A doctor might tell you that a normal range for Vitamin D in blood test results would be 20 to 55ng/ml. However, many health experts believe this range is far too low. Some suggest that the range for optimal health is 50 to 80 ng/ml.

It’s important to note that not all geographic locations are created equal in Vitamin D production. Take note on where you live on the map (pg. 31) because it will have a significant impact on what time of year you get the best Vitamin D production or which months you may not be able to get any Vitamin D production at all, sometimes called the “Vitamin D Winter.”

Your latitude determines the length of your Vitamin D Winter, and the duration of the season increases as you move farther from the equator.

Estimated Vitamin D Winter months according to latitude:

- Latitudes from zero degrees to 35 degrees North or South allow year-round vitamin D production.
- Latitudes above 40 degrees North will experience Vitamin D Winter from approximately November through early March.
- Latitudes below 40 degrees South will experience Vitamin D Winter from approximately June through August.
- Latitudes above 50 degrees North will experience Vitamin D Winter from approximately October through early April.
- Latitudes below 50 degrees South will experience Vitamin D Winter from approximately mid-April through July.

From Chris: We live in the frozen tundra of Minnesota. The summer, spring and fall are legitimately awesome here, but the winter can feel a bit long. A couple years ago I went to the doctor for a routine physical. When my blood work came back I reviewed the results with my doctor, who informed me that I was Vitamin D deficient. He told me that it wasn’t uncommon for him to see people who had absolutely zero Vitamin D in their results. Talk about a deficiency! Now that I know this, from November through March I supplement heavily with Vitamin D3 (5,000 IUs per Day) and also try to get some Vitamin D from natural food sources. In the summer I try to get out in the sun every day.
The important thing to remember is that you need to get natural sun exposure every day. It doesn’t have to be a lot; just 15 to 20 minutes of direct sunlight on your body will do the trick. If you’re fair-skinned make sure not to stay in direct sunlight too long.

Consider your skin type and geography when determining the best solution for your Vitamin D needs.

If you opt for sun, get outside between the hours of 10AM and 2PM, which is prime time for Vitamin D production. If you’re stuck at the office during that time make sure to get up and take a break. Why not go for a 15 to 20 minute walk outside?

![Vitamin D Sun Exposure Zones](http://www.vitdproject.org/Am_I_Vitamin_D_Deficient.html)

**Shouldn’t I Wear Sunscreen?**

Yes, if you’re going to be in the sun for a prolonged period of time, you should wear some sunscreen. There are a couple of things you should know about sunscreen and how it relates to Vitamin D production.

For a long time most sunscreens only blocked the sun’s rays that led to burning, and those are the same UV-B rays that your body needs to produce Vitamin D. If you use a sunscreen with as little as 8 SPF, you will block all UV-B rays and you will not produce any Vitamin D. Obviously you don’t want to burn, so after you get a sufficient amount of sun without sunscreen go ahead and lather up. Make sure your
sunscreen protects from UV-A rays, which are the ones primarily responsible for causing DNA damage and cancer.

Some independent studies point to natural methods of boosting your body’s natural sun-blocking mechanisms. For example, eating more cooked tomatoes, which contain lycopene, has been shown to help protect against the sun. Omega-3s and the antioxidant astaxanthin may also help. You can get these from eating things like salmon and shrimp. You can also supplement with fish oil along with Vitamin D3, both of which may help with sun protection.

Be smart when you’re out in the sun, but don’t think that you have to stay locked up in the house all summer with the blinds closed. It’s good for you to get some sun, especially on those abs that you want to show off!

Sleep Like a Caveman

Sleep is necessary for our bodies to perform and function at an optimal level. When we sleep we are supporting and strengthening our brain, hormone function and immune system, and our bodies are repairing and growing our musculoskeletal system.

Many studies tout the benefits of a good night of Zs. Some of the benefits include: better memory, more creativity, increased ability to solve problems, a more positive demeanor, improved athletic performance, more effective handling of daily stress, and an improved ability to fend off common illnesses like the cold and flu.

Poor sleep habits are a precursor to serious health problems such as: an increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression.

But it can be hard getting the sleep you need! In this world of hustle and distractions, sleep usually takes a backseat to deadlines. It’s a Catch-22 – our desire to be more productive cuts out the most important necessity for us to be productive. So how can we become more conscious of our bedtime habits so that they better serve our needs?

Our goal here is to give some suggestions to help you get more quality sleep, and preferably a full eight hours. Use the following 10 tips to fall asleep faster and easier, sleep deeper and wake up feeling refreshed.
Top 10 Tips to Help You Sleep Like a Rock

Tip #1: Sleep in a pitch-black room. Our circadian rhythms are extremely responsive to light, so by managing exposure to light you will able to help your body fall asleep and wake up at a normal time. Try to get it as dark as possible by drawing the blinds closed and turning off or covering any electronics that give off light. If all else fails, get a sleeping mask that covers your eyes.

Tip #2: Leave your cell phone in another room overnight. Resist the urge to use it as an alarm clock. Exposing yourself to the type of light emitted from a cell phone can throw off your circadian rhythms and make it more difficult to fall asleep. There is also some evidence showing that the radiation levels given off by cell phones can hinder your body’s ability to efficiently transition into the first stage of the sleep cycle. Not to mention if the phone is nearby you’ll be more likely to check your email or Facebook one last time before closing your eyes. Trust us, you’re not missing anything.

Tip #3: Adhere to a no TV or computer rule before bed. The blue light that TVs, computer monitors, smart phones and tablets give off mess with your internal sleep clock and suppress your natural melatonin production, which makes it more difficult for you to easily fall asleep at a normal time. Turn these devices off at least two hours before you go to bed.

Tip #4: Read some fiction before bed. Personally, we read a lot of non-fiction, but it does not make for good nighttime reading. Instead, find a good fiction author you enjoy and read a few chapters at night before bed. You’ll get some guilt-free fiction reading time and your mind will relax. Once you’re yawning and your eyelids get heavy, turn off the reading light and get to sleep.

Tip #5: Empty out every thought you have in a journal. This is a great way to relieve any stress or worry you have from the day. There’s something therapeutic about putting your thoughts down on paper. You don’t have to write much if you don’t want to, just get a couple lines down about your day. Emptying your mind will help you fall asleep quicker and allow you to rest easier.

Tip #6: Find your optimal room temperature for quality sleep. There is a direct correlation to the quality of sleep and room temperature. If the room temperature becomes either too hot or too cold you will be more likely to wake up. Generally speaking your body will become more alert
as your body temperature rises and your body will become more relaxed and sleepier as your temperature lowers. There isn’t an exact temperature that’s right for everyone, but the suggested range is between 65 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Test out what works for you by starting a little on the lower side and have some blankets available. Also, be aware of the humidity level in the room. You don’t want to wake up with a dry, scratchy throat.

Tip #7: Get into the best sleep posture possible. It might be worth experimenting with the Gokhale Method of stretch lying. This is a way for you to relax your spine and body before falling asleep and it gets your body into an optimal posture for deep sleep. Here is a [YouTube video from the creator of the Gokhale Method](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=example), Esther Gokhale, showing step-by-step how to incorporate stretch lying. Once you’re in a comfortable position close your eyes and take some deep breaths through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. You’ll be asleep in no time.

Tip #8: Supplement with Zinc, Magnesium and Vitamin B6 for a better night’s sleep. When you’re living a Paleo lifestyle chances are you’re increasing the amount of physical activity you’re engaging in...at least we hope so. It’s great to be active, but it’s important to acknowledge that high activity levels make it easier for your body to become deficient in certain vitamins and minerals. Zinc and magnesium deficiencies are common in the general population and especially prevalent in athletes and active individuals. A deficiency hinders your body’s ability to efficiently recover from exercise and can decrease strength and power. A good fix is to take a supplement called ZMA, which contains zinc, magnesium and vitamin B6. Look for a product that contains 30 mg of zinc, 450 mg of magnesium and 11 mg of vitamin B6 – this is the optimal ratio of ingredients. ZMA has been shown to help your body experience deeper REM sleep, so you’ll wake up feeling more rested. We have a couple of ZMA supplement recommendations over on the [companion website](https://www.paleo.com/zma).

Tip #9: Wear earplugs and sleep like a baby. Noise is one of the main causes of sleep disturbance. It doesn’t have to be loud street noise to cause sleep problems. It could be snoring, neighbors or a distant television. Do yourself a favor and put in some earplugs. Some say that desensitizing your hearing can be more powerful than a sleeping pill. If you’re a light sleeper, it’s definitely worth a try.
Tip #10: Eat a light dinner and eat dinner earlier in the evening. Eating a heavy meal before bed causes your body to digest your food at the same time it’s trying to get sleep. You’ll rest easier if you’re tank isn’t so full. One way to accomplish this is to move dinner up an hour or two. If you normally eat dinner at 9p.m. and get to bed around 11p.m., try having dinner at 8p.m. instead. This doesn’t mean you should starve; that can be just a bad. If you’re hungry, grab a handful of nuts. Not only do they contain healthy fats and protein that will make you feel full, they also contain magnesium, which helps you get to sleep faster.

The list of tips could go on indefinitely. Your main takeaway should be to find a routine that works for you. You need good, deep sleep to achieve optimal health. Don’t cheat your body by skimping on your bedtime routine.

If you have some sleep tricks that help you get more Zs, please jump over to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PrimalPal and fill us in. We want to hear from you and so does the rest of the community.

Reduce Stress

We’re sure it’s no surprise that chronic stress is bad for your health. It causes your body to release a host of hormones, notably cortisol. Consistent levels of cortisol being released in your body can lead to some serious and potentially complicated health issues, such as: poor digestion, weight gain and degradation of your immune system, just to name a few.

Many of the Paleo lifestyle habits will help you deal more efficiently with stress. Getting enough sleep, rigorous exercise, time for play, healthy eating and natural sun exposure are all great ways to relieve stress.

Another way to relieve stress is to disconnect. Turn off cell phones, TVs, iPads and laptops. Get away from the office and spend some time in nature by yourself or with people you love. Participate in activities you enjoy such as gardening, reading or just lounging around periodically. Your mind and body will thank you for keeping stress at bay.

Reasonable Splurging

There are some things that are just too good to give up. Besides, we’re creating a lifestyle, and hopefully that means creating something that
makes us happy.

No, we’re not against the occasional splurge. In fact we find that it can be a great thing when it’s done thoughtfully and as long as it doesn’t become an emotional or physical crutch.

Here are a few of our favorite reasonable splurges. Feel free to let us know about your favorite Paleo splurges over on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/PrimalPal](http://www.facebook.com/PrimalPal).

**Favorite Splurge #1:** If you’re so inclined, enjoy an adult beverage every now and then. This can take many forms, but our favorites are red wine, beer and the occasional bourbon or tequila. Alcohol becomes a problem when you start consuming it in excess. It can interfere with your sleep and metabolism and cause a host of other issues if you over-consume. If you enjoy the occasional glass of red wine or beer with your dinner, you’ll be fine. Just don’t overdo it. If you’re trying to aggressively lose body fat then you’ll be better served to stay away from alcohol all together. This is especially true for beer, which has higher carbohydrate content than wine and spirits. Also, stay clear of mixed drinks that are loaded with sugar-laden syrups, sodas and other nasty ingredients. The mixers in some drinks can be just as bad for your health as the alcohol itself.

**Favorite Splurge #2:** Have some dark chocolate on occasion. This is especially handy for an intense sweet-tooth attack. Don’t skimp on quality – look for bars with at least 70 percent cacao, (preferably organic) and less than 10 grams of sugar per serving. Avoid Dutch-processed types, which strip the cacao of healthy flavanol content. Again, this is a splurge so don’t get carried away. A normal sized bar should last you about a week or more.

**Favorite Splurge #3:** If you can tolerate dairy, don’t be shy about having a little bit of high quality cheese around the house. Don’t bother with those little yellow bricks of chemicals. Go for organic, grass-fed, white, aged cheeses. These types of cheeses are loaded with good fats, and the lactose content is next to zero.

**Favorite Splurge #4:** If you like to drink coffee in the morning, help yourself to a cup. We drink coffee around here and it’s going to stay that way. The argument you’ll hear most often about coffee is focused on the caffeine content. Caffeine is a stimulant and the Paleo purists out there may shy away from it. If you find yourself downing four cups of coffee every morning just to wake up, there’s probably an underlying

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Who said you can't treat yourself every once in a while?
problem. Maybe you’re not getting enough quality sleep or physical activity. But if you enjoy a cup of Joe in the morning while you scan the paper or have your breakfast, you’re not going to hurt anything. However, don’t drink coffee later in the day. The time will be different for everyone, but we find that caffeine after 1p.m. leads to trouble falling asleep. Make sure that you get coffee made with organic coffee beans. Conventional coffee beans contain extremely high levels of pesticides.

**Favorite Splurge #5:** We’re staying on a dairy and coffee kick with this splurge. We’ve been asked about what we put in our coffee. Stop right there and put the soy milk down! We invest in a little high quality, organic heavy cream. If you can find unpasteurized and raw cream, all the better. We’ll sometimes splash a tablespoon of heavy cream in our coffee. The other way we enjoy a little heavy cream is by whipping some up with a bit of honey and vanilla and putting it over a bowl of berries. It’s absolutely delicious and simple, but only for a once-in-a-while treat.

The key take away in regards to splurging is to do so in moderation and to be in control. When you’re just starting out, you might want to get rid of your vices one at a time and test how you feel. If you really feel like you’re addicted to something, examine the feelings you are attaching to it. Once you’ve identified the emotions and beliefs tied to the habit you can consciously decide to make a change.

Also, know when to leave Pandora’s box alone. We each have slippery-slope items that we simply won’t touch because we know we won’t stop at one, and eating too many will make our body feel bad. For Chris, it’s Oreos and Tostitos – bags of them are not welcome in his house. Know your slippery slope items and just stay away from them.

**Make Cooking Fun**

One of the perks of living a Paleo lifestyle is getting back in touch with food. This not only means being more conscientious of the sources of our food but also enjoying the process of cooking and preparing our meals.

The enjoyment of cooking a delicious, healthy meal is one of our favorite parts of the Paleo lifestyle. You may find that there are times that you would have previously leaned towards convenience, but now you would rather dive into a new recipe or cooking technique. When
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you start to enjoy cooking again, the possibilities are endless!

Food brings people together. Get your Paleo friends together and host a weekly Paleo dinner night where everyone brings a Paleo dish. Use these nights to introduce Paleo to your non-Paleo friends. They’ll be amazed by all the amazing food choices, and no one will miss the bread! You could even throw a weekend Paleo barbeque and get some of your daily sun exposure and low impact playtime while you’re at it.

The Paleo Kitchen Arsenal

As you get into the habit of preparing your own meals you’ll find that having the right tools in the kitchen will help you enjoy the cooking process even more. Here are some of the cooking tools you should consider having in your Paleo kitchen arsenal. You can check out our resource blog for the specific brands and models we recommend.

- Food Processor
- Stainless Steel Skillets and Pans
- Slow Cooker
- Dutch Oven
- Countertop Blender
- Hand Blender
- Cutting Boards
- Knives
- Baking Sheets
- Roasting Pan with Rack
- Cast Iron Skillet

The list could go on but if you invest in some quality kitchen tools you’ll make your meal preparation easier and more enjoyable. For the most bang for your investment, we would recommend starting by spending on quality knives, a sturdy dutch oven, a roasting pan with rack, a couple of nice skillets and a top-notch food processor.

Have fun with the cooking process. It’s an opportunity to learn new skills with delicious results!

Add a dutch oven to your kitchen arsenal and prepare to be amazed.
Supplements and Paleo

There are some supplements that seem to be widely accepted in the Paleo community. However, everyone has unique goals, so you should consider finding supplements that fit within yours. It’s also a good idea to talk with your doctor if you’re considering starting any supplements. None of the supplements we’re talking about are dangerous, but make sure you use them as directed. It’s also very important to realize that they’re called “supplements” and not “substitutes” for a reason. They are meant to supplement a healthy diet and lifestyle, and no amount of supplementation will help you lose fat or add muscle if you don’t have a foundation built on solid nutrition and exercise.

Many health experts believe that we don’t get enough of the essential vitamins and minerals that we need from our daily food intake. There are a number of reasons for this such as how food is grown or raised, processing, and additives and preservatives. Of course you’re following a Paleo lifestyle so you will get more nutrients from your food than the average person. Keep in mind that if you’re a very active person your body will automatically need more of every type of nutrient. Look at supplements as insurance against any sort of nutrient deficiency.

For all of these supplements you can see our specific recommendations over on the companion website to this eBook.

**Probiotics** – A quality probiotic can help you establish healthy gut flora, which aid in digestion and nutrient absorption. While maybe not an everyday supplement, it may be advisable to take during high amounts of stress, or if you were sick and took a round of antibiotics.

**ZMA** – We’ve already discussed what ZMA is in the sleeping section (pg. 34). If you’re a physically active person ZMA will help your body recover by replenishing your Zinc, Magnesium and Vitamin B6 levels. It will also help improve your sleep.

**Multivitamin** – We consider a good multivitamin the ultimate insurance. There really is not a good reason to skip taking a high quality daily multivitamin.

**Fish Oil** – Today’s modern diets contain a high amount of omega-6 fatty acids, which are pro-inflammatory in large amounts. Inflammation is not good for your body, and anything you can do to reduce inflammation will improve your health. Fish oil supplies the body with
omega-3 fatty acids. Even if you’re eating a lot of wild salmon, organic eggs and grass-fed beef, you may still want to take a high quality fish oil supplement. The average person who eats a “normal” diet has an omega-6 to omega-3 ratio of 20:1 and in some cases as high as 30:1. Really the ratio should be as close to 1:1 as possible for optimum health benefits.

**Protein Powder** – Having a quality protein powder around is a convenient way to get a quick, protein-rich snack. We enjoy mixing some into smoothies or just having some in a shaker bottle for a quick shot of protein after a workout. Look for whey protein because it is easily digestible and absorbable. Try to find a protein powder with very little sugar – less than five grams per serving is a good goal. Also, look for powders that have as few fillers and additives as possible. Some additives are to be expected for the product to actually keep its powdery consistency. But if the list of additives is longer than two or three, steer clear. Check out our [protein powder recommendations on the companion website](#).

**Vitamin D3** – We already discussed sun exposure in great detail. Helping your body produce Vitamin D naturally on its own is definitely best, but sometimes this is impossible. Make sure to supplement with Vitamin D3 during your area’s Vitamin D Winter. Since most of us have desk jobs and spend a lot of time inside during optimal sun time, it may be a good idea to continue to supplement with Vitamin D3 year round. Consider asking for your Vitamin D levels to be tested during your next routine physical to determine if you are Vitamin D deficient, and discuss solutions with your doctor if you are.

There are many other supplements on the market. Most of them are packed with fillers and have a bunch of stuff in them that your body doesn’t need. If you’re following a healthy Paleo lifestyle, you’ll be way ahead of the average Joe eating a conventional, grain-based diet. As you can see there aren’t any crazy stimulant-fat-burning-supplements on our list. If you’re sticking to Paleo foods and getting some challenging exercise in every week, the fat will melt off without those wacky pills.

### What to do When You Goof Up

There will be times when you want to have a piece of chocolate cake at the birthday party. Or you might decide to take the kids out for ice cream. Some people call it “cheating.” If you’re serious about making a change in your life for the better then there really is no need for a cheat
day. We suggest finding some Paleo-friendly alternatives for times when you have a sugar craving or if you’re really fighting the urge to eat grains. There are plenty of crave-able Paleo foods!

But what do you do when you slip up and give in to temptation? It happens to everyone. Sometimes people will slip up early in the day (Donuts at work? Don’t mind if I do!), and they let it derail the rest of their day. What started as a one-time event turns into an all-day pig out. We know. We have each been this person.

Try thinking about it like a flat tire. What do you do when you get a flat tire? Do you say, “Well this car is a piece of junk, so I’m just going to light a match and blow the whole thing up?” No! You change the tire and get on with the trip.

It’s the same with trying to change your eating habits. If you have a flat tire event, simply step back and assess what just happened, fix it and then continue on with your plan. Could you do something to prevent it from happening again?

Don’t worry – you did not fail! You only fail if you let a one-time event spiral out of control and you quit your commitment to your health. Remember your “why!”

Closing Thoughts

One of our favorite quotes is by Socrates who said, "Be the person you wish to seem.”

This is such a powerful idea. We probably all imagine an ideal person we want to be sometime in the future when all the stars align. The cool thing is that we can choose to be that ideal person right now, today.

If you want to be a fit and healthy person then start being a fit and healthy person. It doesn’t mean you’ll be perfect, but there is no reason to put off healthy actions today in the hopes that someday you’ll be more active and fit.

We created the PrimalPal system as a simple way to help people plan their Paleo meals and shopping trips. Everyone needs some help, especially when making a lifestyle change. We knew that having a way to easily create a Paleo meal plan and shopping list would help us achieve our goals, and we know it will help you too.

Go to www.PrimalPal.net and try the system for free for 10 days.
THE RIDICULOUSLY EASY GUIDE TO PALEO

There's no obligation and you'll get to experience first-hand how powerful PrimalPal can be for someone who wants to live a more healthy and energetic life.

Thanks for reading! Join the community and take advantage of the 10-Day Free Trial of PrimalPal right now.