

These are the conclusions I have come to believe in with respect to managing stress and body weight:

1. The right amount of protein and proper hydration lower the body fat percentage, or at the very least, maintains it.
2. To lose weight, especially around the middle, total carbohydrates must be reduced, but it is important not to go too low because the brain and the nervous system require a steady supply and glycogen stores need to be replenished. Glycogen is what provides us with steady energy throughout the day as well as during a workout. Changing the types of carbs consumed can be just as important as reducing total carbs.
3. Stress and inflammation increase the body fat percentage or prevent it from decreasing. Digestive issues are an indication that the body is under higher levels of stress and that inflammation is present.
4. Weight and body fat percentage will not budge when the diet contains too much saturated fat and not enough unsaturated fat, especially omega 3 fatty acids. Saturated fat (animal fat) increases inflammation. Omega 3 fatty acids (fish oil, flax oil, chia seeds) assist in decreasing inflammation.
5. When we are relaxed and during periods of manageable stress levels, following a strict diet is not as crucial to maintaining results.
6. During times of increased stress, automatically adopting the Warrior Diet is imperative to continue to lose weight or to maintain weight previously lost. The Warrior Diet also helps to ensure our body is receiving the nutrients it requires to appropriately deal with the stress and emerge from the stressful situation stronger instead of weaker. The eating plans I create with my nutrition clients are partially based on the Warrior Diet principles below.

Unfortunately, most of us are in situations where we experience increased levels of stress most of the time instead of only occasionally. Therefore, in order to see weight loss results, it becomes imperative to follow a very strict diet, and even then, depending on the individual, weight loss is not guaranteed.

If you wish to relax your diet a little without sacrificing results, or for some people, if you wish to move past a plateau or simply get the weight loss ball rolling, it is imperative to address your stress:

- Dump what doesn't belong to you or what you cannot do anything about
- Deal with the stress that you can do something about
- Ensure your lifestyle includes various ways that allow you to manage the stress you cannot change such as consistent exercise, mindful breathing, and activities that you enjoy.

The Warrior Diet

The Warrior Diet is a way of eating when you are busy and want to be productive or when you are experiencing higher levels of stress.

- Consists of small protein meals eaten every 2-3 hours throughout the day.

- Simple meals often consisting of one to three foods – a quality protein source, a vegetable, a sprinkling of fat (eg. olive oil, flax oil, avocado)
- Big meals with lots of different foods can act as a mental and physical sedative and they require a lot of energy and blood to digest and absorb the nutrients. When you are busy, you need to keep it simple.
- The Warrior Diet concept is that food is fuel; therefore, you give your body what it needs, when it needs it, for continued energy.

