



Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

Sonni,

I am currently in the program, training for my first marathon in March. I would like to lose around 8-10 pounds in the process of training, but I don't want to jeopardize my energy level and muscle mass in doing so. Do you have any nutrition guidelines for someone in my situation? Please advise.

S.M.

A: Hey S.M. I'm going to begin with the assumption (because we've not formally met face to face...yet) that you actually have 8 to 10 pounds to lose. If your % of body fat were already very low, the loss of this additional 8 to 10 would be counter-productive and VERY hard to lose.

Ok, here's how we can go about it. Rather than spouting all the latest theories on fat metabolism, insulin fluctuation, and %'s of carbs to fat and protein (as alot of popular books do).....I will give you the simple basis on why **any eating-habit** (often referred to as a 'diet') works. The individual who successfully loses the fat (& I'm differentiating between the words 'weight' and 'fat', here).....is because more calories are burned than ingested. End of story.

Not something Atkins, the Zone, or Sugar-busters will admit. Each have their merits in terms of **HOW** (in the balance equation of one's health).....but the reason that someone loses fat (again, not simply "weight") is due to 'demand exceeds intake'.

So, to lose unwanted fat, you want to find out how many calories it will take for you to cut out for you to safely begin to tap into those fat stores you have. You may be close and within 100 calories/day. You may not be. But know that, with fat, "how much your demand is" is half of the equation. So you may find that on intensive training days (or 'longer duration' days) your calorie demand will, obviously, be higher than on recovery-oriented days.

How to know what to eliminate (given the current training demand)? Trial and error.

Begin by eliminating just 100 calories each day.....(yes, this means counting them for a period of time.).....begin with a week. Eat normally for 3 days, record calories, take the average of the 3 days. Let's say you found your average intake to be 2200/day. For a week, allow for 2100/day and **NO MORE**.

DO NOTHING DRASTIC, like eliminating carbs, protein, or even fat (but remember that fat DOES have 9 calories per gram.....whereas carbs and protein have 4 each).

DON'T SKIP MEALS. In fact, try to spread the feeding out to MORE often (to graze like a cow) rather than on just 2-3 meals per day.

SEEK A BALANCE in every meal. [ie:Fat and protein can lower the glycemic factor of the carbs you eat for a much more even "burn" through the day.....avoiding the hunger monkey from hopping on your back....."pasta without meat" was one of the worst fads ever peddled to endurance athletes.]

NEVER SKIP BREAKFAST. This gets the metabolism going. Sleeping is fasting.....and fasting is NOT good for speeding the burn-rate (metabolism) that you have.....that's why they call it "break-FAST".....you're breaking the fasting.

some other little helpers are to:

- avoid sweets (except immediately before, during, or after training)
- drink alot of water
- take a multi-vitamin w/ iron and chomium piccolinate w/ meals
- and, of course, don't skip workouts

After one week, monitor your weight, energy levels and feeling of health. If you've lost more than 2 pounds in the 1st week.....add a pound back and start over. Nothing above 2 pounds (unless someone were extremely obese) per week is healthy.....or long term.

STUDIO



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One pound per week is best with all of the hormonal and enzyme changes that are trying to catch-up to your discipline. **Like in ALL training, the body changes slower than our minds do.**

If you've lost a pound.....stay the course (cutting out 100/day) and don't change a thing until you plateau.

If you've not lost a thing.....eliminate 200/day and evaluate, etc....

As you get lower in % of Bodyfat, expect the body to resist. A females body is designed and adapted to support 2 life-forms (mom and baby), thus the difference between men's "set-points" and women's.....That's why below a certain % point (different for each individual woman) women stop menstrating. But I don't recomend experimenting with the search for that 'set-point'.....these are hormone levels we're stressing, here.

So as you can see, BALANCE is the key with your experiment to find the ideal calorie intake # for you. Balance in what you eat, when you eat, how you eat.....and even in how much you enjoy what you eat. I LOVE to eat.....just ask Randy.....fortunately, I love to train/race as well.....thus the intake/out-go balance.

Be sure and let me know if you've got questions as you get deeper into the process. **You may not want to continue the 'elimination of calories process' the week before the race in March.** You'll need it all in the marathon.

Just pick it back up after you've recovered from it days after.

Sonni Dyer