



ALL NATURAL

What life would be like if we removed the assembly line from the grocery store.

By Todd Soura

With each warm day, the reality becomes a little clearer: You. In a bathing suit. At the beach.

It's enough to make the fittest among us flinch, including myself.

So here's what I'm offering: a plan to drop five to seven pounds in 10 days. Sounds a bit dramatic, you're likely thinking. It is. It's going to require a level of discipline you probably haven't reached in a while, if at all.

The good news: no calorie counting. The bad news: calorie counting is going to feel like a beautiful respite when you finish with this.

Before we get started, the requisite disclaimer. Results will vary. Most should expect to lose between five to seven pounds by strictly adhering to the following regimen. Certainly not included are those of you in great shape already. But while you shouldn't expect to drop any weight, this plan will reduce bloating and boost your energy and overall health. So there's a little something for everyone.

Now, down to work. This is my 10-Day, Non-processed Food Plan. The basic aim: cleanse the system of refined sugars, flour, bread and artificial sweeteners.

First, what you are not allowed to consume:

- Processed food (duh). If the item in question has been altered in any way from its original state, it is processed. A potato, for example, is unprocessed. A potato chip is processed.
- Bread, including whole wheat, grain, flax and gluten-free. Also, bagels, pitas, tortillas, muffins and all of the like. How many did we just lose? You can make it 10 days without bread. Use a lettuce wrap instead. Or use nothing at all.
- Deli-style lunchmeat. Yes, turkey is relatively healthy, but not so much when it's cut from a turkey ball that's void of bones. That qualifies as processed.
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Flour-based foods, including pizza,

cookies, pancakes, waffles, crackers and pretzels

- Candy
- White rice
- Pasta, including whole wheat
- Processed meats, including ham, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, hot dogs and salami. If it's not named after a type of cut or an animal part, it's processed.
- Diet drinks with artificial sweetener
- Store-bought fruit juices, which are not necessarily bad for you; they're just not part of this plan.

What you can consume:

- Fruits and vegetables of all kinds
- Eggs
- Turkey, chicken, beef and bison (filet or ground). Vegetarians, processed tofu foods are allowed.
- Fish and shellfish
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal, oat bran and all Kashi-brand cereals
- Beans. Avoid them, though, if sugar and other additives are involved.
- Nuts. Again, avoid them if they've been mixed with additives.
- "Natural" peanut and almond butters
- Raisins. Not Craisins or dried blueberries. Sugar is added to both.
- Coffee and tea

A day on the Non-processed Food Plan

Breakfast: oat bran with fruit and an egg

Morning snack: a serving of plain Greek yogurt with sliced fruit

Lunch: a salad with sliced chicken, vegetables, chickpeas and an olive oil-and-vinegar dressing

Afternoon snack: a palm-size serving of homemade trail mix (nuts and raisins)

Dinner: salmon, broccoli and a potato (with plain yogurt and sea salt for flavor)

Evening snack (if needed): a palm-size serving of walnuts or popcorn (with sea salt for flavor) or a chicken breast

- Spices, including pepper and cinnamon
- Raw (or unprocessed) honey
- Homemade fresh-fruit smoothies. Consider adding flax or chia seeds.
- Sea or Himalayan salt
- Alcohol, but — *but* — limit yourself to no more than seven total drinks. And even then, only wine, beer or liquor on ice or with seltzer. No tonic or mixed drinks.

As for condiments, use crushed tomatoes in place of ketchup. Guacamole is safe. Make your own salad dressing by mixing extra virgin olive oil and vinegar. Almost all store-bought dressings are processed. And use extra virgin olive and coconut oils for cooking.

Milk is processed, but because it's such a staple, it's allowed, as is butter and plain yogurt (add your own fruit). Cheese, however, is not allowed. Yes, I know some of it is not processed.

If you get nothing else out of this, I hope at least it encourages you to start reading labels. You'll be surprised to discover all the evil that's lurking within our coveted processed foods and maybe even what constitutes a processed food. Honey's a good example. Most of the kinds you see on the shelves at the grocery store are highly processed and, thus, completely void of nutrients.

Be honest with yourself and you should see a fairly dramatic weight loss quickly. I recently conducted a similar challenge with my clients, only it lasted 28 days. The majority lost five or more pounds in the first 10 days.

The foods that are permissible are largely fibrous, which means they're filling by nature. But use common sense regarding serving sizes. Every morsel counts. And if you slip a chip, start over.

Good luck. The next article you read by me will be five pounds from now.

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