

MEAN

CLEAN

LEAN

**TOUGH-LOVE NUTRITION
FOR MEN OVER 40**

LOWER INSULIN • BURN FAT • BUILD STRENGTH

BY PAUL DIEHL

MEAN CLEAN LEAN

The Simple Version

A Plain-English Guide to
Losing Fat, Fixing Your Metabolism,
and Feeling Great After 40

By Paul Diehl

Man vs Health

Based on the original Mean Clean Lean manuscript.
Rewritten for easy reading—no medical jargon, no confusion.

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A Note to the Reader

This book is the simple version of Mean Clean Lean.

The original book is packed with science, formulas, and detailed explanations. It's powerful—but some readers told me it was hard to follow. Their parents picked it up and got lost. Friends gave up halfway through.

That's a problem. If the message doesn't land, the message doesn't work.

So I rewrote the whole thing in plain English. No medical jargon. No complicated math. No ten-dollar words when a two-dollar word works just fine.

Every single idea from the original book is still here. I just explain it the way I'd explain it to my mom and dad at the kitchen table.

If you want the deep science and exact formulas, the full book has everything. But if you want to understand the “what” and the “why” without getting bogged down, you're in the right place.

Let's keep it simple.

Setting the Scene

Health Is the Real Wealth

Before anything else, let me say this as plainly as I can:

Your health is more valuable than your money.

Think about it. What good is a fat bank account if you're too tired to enjoy it? What good is retirement if you can't walk around the block without getting winded?

Your career, your family, your hobbies—none of it works if your body is falling apart. Health comes first. Everything else is built on top of it.

Most men wait until something breaks before they pay attention. Don't be that guy. Fix it now, while you still have the energy to make it count.

The Real Problem: Insulin

Most guys have tried dieting before. You've cut calories, skipped meals, hit the gym, tried whatever the latest trend was—and the fat came right back.

Here's the thing: it's not your fault, and you're not broken. The problem is something almost nobody talks about in simple terms:

Insulin.

Let me explain insulin in the simplest way possible:

Insulin is a hormone your body makes. Every time you eat—especially sugary or starchy foods—your blood sugar goes up.

Your body releases insulin to deal with that sugar. Insulin's job is to move sugar out of your blood and into your cells for energy.

That sounds helpful, right? It is—when it works properly.

The problem is what happens when there's too much insulin. When insulin is high, your body goes into “storage mode.” It takes any extra energy and locks it away as fat. And as long as insulin stays high, your body **cannot burn that fat**. It's like a locked door—the fat is trapped inside.

Here's the simplest way to think about it:

High insulin = your body stores fat and keeps it locked up.

Low insulin = your body can finally unlock and burn that fat.

That's the core idea of this entire book. Everything else—the food choices, the meal timing, the exercise—all works toward one goal: **getting your insulin levels down so your body can start burning fat again.**

The Factory Analogy

Think of your body like a factory.

Insulin is the floor manager. When food comes in (that's the raw material), the manager's job is to move it where it needs to go. First, he sends it to the machines that need fuel right now (your muscles and organs). If there's extra, he puts it in short-term storage (a reserve tank in your liver and muscles called glycogen).

Simple enough, right?

But here's the catch: **the manager also controls a second warehouse—your fat cells.** And here's the rule: as long as the manager is on the factory floor dealing with incoming food, he keeps the fat warehouse **locked shut.** Nothing can leave.

So if you're eating all day long—breakfast, snacks, lunch, more snacks, dinner, late-night treats—the manager never clocks out. He's always on the floor. And that fat warehouse? It stays locked. Day after day. Year after year.

The fix: Stop flooding the factory. When you eat less often and eat the right foods, the manager finally clocks out. The fat warehouse unlocks. And your body starts using that stored fat for energy.

That's what this whole program does. It gives the manager a break so the fat can finally leave.

What Is Insulin Resistance?

When you've been eating too much sugar and starch for years, something bad happens: **the locks on your cells get rusty.**

Insulin keeps showing up with the key, but the locks don't open as easily anymore. So your body makes **more** insulin to try harder. This is called **insulin resistance**—your cells are resisting insulin's signal.

Think of it like shouting at someone who's wearing headphones. You have to yell louder and louder. Eventually, you're screaming, and they still can barely hear you.

Meanwhile, all that extra insulin floating around keeps your fat locked up even tighter. You're tired, foggy, hungry, and gaining weight—even when you think you're eating healthy.

Insulin resistance is the root cause of most weight problems in men over 40. Fix insulin, and everything else starts to improve: your energy, your focus, your mood, your sleep, even your sex drive.

Two Types of Fat

Not all body fat is the same. There are two main kinds:

Subcutaneous fat is the fat just under your skin—the stuff you can pinch. It’s the “love handles” and the belly pouch. It’s annoying and you don’t like how it looks, but it’s mostly harmless.

Visceral fat is the dangerous one. It hides deep inside your belly, wrapping around your organs—your liver, your heart, your pancreas. You can’t see it or pinch it, but it’s there. This fat causes inflammation, raises blood pressure, clogs arteries, and fuels serious diseases like heart attacks and diabetes.

Your doctor might focus on your weight or cholesterol, but those are just symptoms. **The real enemy is the high insulin that created that visceral fat in the first place.** Fix the insulin, and the dangerous fat starts to go away.

Standard Keto vs. Power Keto

You may have heard of the keto diet. Standard keto means eating very high fat, almost no carbs, and moderate protein. It works, but it’s extremely strict and hard to maintain long-term. Most people burn out.

Power Keto is my modified version of keto, built specifically for real men living real lives. Here’s how it’s different:

- It keeps **protein higher** so you don’t lose muscle.

- It includes **planned carb days** (called refeeds) so your body stays flexible and you don't go crazy.
- It has **three phases** that adapt as you get leaner—you're not stuck on one rigid plan forever.

Power Keto trains your body to switch between burning sugar and burning fat. That's called **metabolic flexibility**, and it's the ultimate goal. You don't want to be stuck on any one fuel source—you want your body to use whatever's available.

Why I Wrote This

I'm a dad of two kids and a former tech guy married to a doctor. I spent years watching my weight creep up despite what I thought was healthy eating and regular exercise.

The breaking point came when my five-year-old daughter looked at me and said, "Daddy has a big belly." She wasn't being mean. She was just saying what she saw. But it hit me like a ton of bricks.

I dove into research—real research, not fad diets. I learned from scientists, doctors, and coaches. I tested everything on myself. And I built a system that finally worked.

I lost the stubborn fat. My energy came back. My brain fog lifted. I felt like myself again.

That system is what this book teaches you.

What Does "Mean Clean Lean" Actually Mean?

Each word is a chapter and a mindset:

MEAN = Get your head right. Build mental toughness. Stop making excuses and start acting like the man you want to be.

CLEAN = Fix your food. Cut out the junk that's poisoning your system. Eat real food that helps your body instead of hurting it.

LEAN = Follow the Power Keto plan. Lower your insulin. Burn fat. Get results.

MACHINE = Keep it going for life. Maintain your results, troubleshoot problems, and never slide backward.

Each chapter builds on the one before it. Read them in order.

Levels of Readiness

Before you start, be honest about where you are right now:

Level 1: Curious. You're interested, but fear is holding you back. You're worried it won't work or that you'll fail again. That's okay—keep reading.

Level 2: Fed Up. You're sick of feeling this way and you're ready to try. But you're still holding onto some bad habits—the late-night snacks, the “I'll start Monday” mindset, the “just this once” treats. You're half in, half out. Progress is slow because you haven't fully committed.

Level 3: Committed. This is where change happens. You're done negotiating with yourself. You understand that giving up some comforts isn't a loss—it's the price of admission to a better life. You're all in.

This book is designed for Level 3, but if you're at Level 1 or 2, keep going. The information itself can push you to Level 3.

MEAN — Get Your Head Right

If your mind isn't in it, nothing else matters. You can have the perfect diet plan, the best gym, and all the time in the world—but if your head isn't right, you'll quit.

“Mean” doesn't mean angry. It means **focused, precise, and done with excuses**. It's the moment you stop saying “I'll try” and start saying “I will.”

This chapter is about three things:

1. Self-Vision: See the Man You're Becoming

Your values are like a compass. They point you toward the life you actually want. But most of us never stop to look at the compass.

Sit down for a few minutes. Think about what really matters to you. Maybe it's being around for your kids. Maybe it's having the energy to enjoy retirement. Maybe it's just feeling confident when you look in the mirror.

Now turn those values into a picture of your future self. This is your **Self-Vision**.

There are two ways to do this:

Option A: A Vision Board. Gather pictures (from magazines, online, wherever) that represent the life you want. Your health, your family, your career. Pin them where you'll see them every day—your bathroom mirror, your office wall, your phone's lock screen. If you prefer words over pictures, write a short paragraph describing your best self as if it's already real: “I wake up with energy. I feel strong. I'm present for my family.”

Option B: A Daily Sketch. Every morning, grab a blank piece of paper and quickly draw or write out your vision. Stick figures are fine. Symbols and shorthand work great. The point is to spend a few minutes every day thinking about who you're becoming.

Then, act like that person. This is called mirroring. Before a meal, a workout, or a tough moment, ask yourself: "What would the best version of me do right now?" Then do that. Over time, the gap between who you are and who you're becoming gets smaller and smaller until it disappears.

Get started at ManVsHealth.com/self-vision.

2. Self-Contract: Write It Down and Sign It

A Self-Contract is a promise you make to yourself, on paper. It has four parts:

The Date: When you'll reach your goal (you'll fill this in after the Lean chapter teaches you how to calculate it).

The Goal: Your target body fat percentage (15% is the long-term target for most men).

What You'll Do: The specific daily habits—like lifting three times a week, walking every day, keeping carbs low, hitting your protein target, and going to bed by 10:30 PM.

What You'll Stop Doing: The habits that are holding you back—like late-night snacking, eating junk, or binge-watching TV instead of sleeping.

Print it. Sign it. Put it where you'll see it every day. Read it every morning and every night.

This is not a wish list. It's a contract. And contracts don't depend on how you're feeling that day.

Get your template at ManVsHealth.com/self-vision (click "Self-Contract").

3. Self-Protection: Guard Your New Identity

Once you start changing, the world will try to pull you back. Coworkers will offer cookies. Friends will pressure you to drink. Family will bring home your old favorite junk food.

Think of it like a recovering alcoholic at a party. People keep offering drinks. You say no—again and again. If it gets too hard, you leave. That's not being rude. That's protecting your recovery.

Sugar works the same way. You have to say no until it becomes automatic. Every "no" makes the next one easier.

Protection also means being kind to yourself. When you slip (and you will), don't beat yourself up. Don't turn one bad meal into a bad week. Just take a breath, reset, and get back on track. Every time you come back, you get stronger.

Your First Action Step

Starting right now—today—cut the obvious junk. You already know what it is:

Candy. Cake. Cookies. Chips. Soda. Fast food. The "just one more" that becomes six.

You don't need to count grams or track calories yet. Just stop putting poison in your body. That's Step One.

Accountability: Don't Go It Alone

The most successful people—CEOs, athletes, top performers—don't do it alone. They have coaches and accountability systems.

We've built tools to help:

The Man Plan (free)—An automated system that calculates all your nutrition numbers and sends you reminders via text message. No apps, no passwords, no spreadsheets. Get started at ManVsHealth.com/the-man-plan.

JumpStart Session—A one-time deep-dive coaching call to set everything up for you. Book at ManVsHealth.com/jumpstart.

Ongoing Coaching—Weekly or bi-weekly check-ins with regular accountability. Learn more at ManVsHealth.com/optimizing.

Medical Optimization—If your issues go beyond nutrition (hormones, metabolic dysfunction), our licensed providers can help. See ManVsHealth.com/medical.

CLEAN — Fix Your Food

“Clean” doesn’t mean perfect. You’re probably not moving to a cabin in the woods to grow your own food. You live in the real world with traffic, kids, deadlines, and temptation.

Clean means: **eat real food, as close to how nature made it as possible.** Strip out the processed garbage. When you do, your insulin calms down, your inflammation goes away, and your body starts working the way it’s supposed to.

Clean also means **detaching emotionally from food.** Food is not comfort. It’s not a reward. It’s not entertainment. It’s fuel. Think of eating like brushing your teeth—you do it because your body needs it, not because it’s exciting.

The Paleo Blueprint (In Simple Terms)

For millions of years, humans ate whatever they could hunt, fish, or dig out of the ground. There were no grocery stores, no fast food, no snacks. People ate meat, fish, roots (like potatoes), and whatever fruit they could find in season.

Their bodies ran mostly on **fat** as fuel. Carbs (from fruit and roots) were a seasonal treat—available in summer but scarce in winter. This meant their bodies naturally cycled between burning sugar and burning fat. That’s exactly the metabolic flexibility we’re trying to get back.

The modern diet has flipped this completely. We eat sugar and starch constantly—breakfast cereal, sandwiches, pasta, snacks, soda—and our bodies never get the chance to switch over to fat-burning mode. The factory manager never clocks out.

The baseline eating plan in this book is based on what our ancestors ate, with a few modern updates. Here's what that looks like:

What to Eat (The Green List)

Protein — The Most Important Thing You Eat

What is protein? Protein is the building block of muscle, skin, hair, hormones, and almost everything else in your body. When you eat protein, your body uses it to repair and build muscle tissue. For men over 40, getting enough protein is absolutely critical because you're naturally losing muscle every year.

Why it matters for fat loss: Muscle is like an engine that burns fuel even when it's idling. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn just sitting around. Protein also keeps you feeling full longer and has almost no effect on insulin compared to carbs.

Best protein sources:

- **Eggs** — nature's perfect food. Aim for 2–4 per day. Pasture-raised is best.
- **Chicken breast** — lean, versatile, easy to find. My go-to lunch protein.
- **Lean beef** (grass-fed if you can) — once or twice a week.
- **Fish and shellfish** — sardines, mackerel, shrimp, and scallops are great choices. Wild-caught preferred.
- **Bone broth and collagen** — great for gut health, joints, and getting extra protein. I drink "Sipping Bone Broth" from Lono Life.

- **Organ meats** (liver, heart) — once a week if you can handle them. These are nature’s multivitamin.
- **Whey protein powder** — great after workouts. I use goat whey (brand: Mt. Capra) because it’s easier on digestion.

Skip these: processed deli meats (full of preservatives), pork (too inflammatory), and “protein snack foods” in candy-bar wrappers (they’re just junk food in disguise).

Fats — Your Main Fuel Source

What is fat (in food)? Dietary fat is a dense source of energy. On Power Keto, fat becomes your body’s primary fuel instead of sugar. Not all fats are equal—some heal, some harm.

Good fats to eat daily:

- **Extra-virgin olive oil** and **avocado oil** — for cooking and drizzling.
- **Avocados** — great source of healthy fat and fiber.
- **Grass-fed butter and ghee** — for cooking and adding to coffee.
- **MCT oil** — a concentrated fat from coconuts that boosts brain energy. I add 1 tablespoon to my daily smoothie.
- **Cheese** (if you tolerate dairy) — goat cheese, aged cheddar, Gouda, provolone. Full-fat, not low-fat.
- **Cottage cheese** — my evening snack. It contains casein, a slow-absorbing protein that feeds your muscles overnight.
- **Whole eggs** — the yolk has the good fat. Don’t throw it away.

Limit these: Nuts and seeds. They're okay as an occasional snack (a tablespoon of almond butter, a small handful of walnuts), but they're easy to overeat and can cause gut irritation. Don't make them a daily habit.

Avoid completely: Seed oils (soybean, corn, canola, sunflower, safflower, cottonseed). These are in almost every processed food and restaurant meal. They cause inflammation and mess up your cells. Also avoid anything labeled "partially hydrogenated"—that's trans fat, and it's poison.

Carbs — Use Sparingly, Choose Wisely

What are carbs? Carbohydrates are sugars and starches found in food. When you eat them, your body breaks them down into glucose (blood sugar), which triggers insulin release. On this plan, carbs are kept very low—around 10% of your daily food—to keep insulin down.

Good carb sources (in small amounts):

- **Berries** — blueberries (especially wild ones), blackberries, raspberries, strawberries. High in antioxidants, low in sugar.
- **Citrus fruits** — oranges, lemons, limes. Small portions.
- **Roots and tubers** — potatoes (skin-on), sweet potatoes, yams, carrots, beets. Clean, natural carbs. Keep portions small—one little red potato already has about 18 grams of carbs.

A note on vegetables: Most people assume "healthy" means eating tons of salad. Here's a surprise: raw vegetables (especially leafy greens and stems) contain natural defense chemicals called **lectins** and **oxalates** that can irritate your gut, especially if it's already inflamed. If you want to eat vegetables, **cook them first** (boil, steam, or roast)—cooking breaks down most of those

irritants. But don't stress about eating salads. You can get everything you need from animal protein, good fats, roots, and fruits.

Hard no's:

- Sugar in all forms — candy, cake, cookies, ice cream, muffins, donuts.
- Bread, pasta, cereal, bagels, pizza crust.
- Soda, juice, energy drinks.
- “Keto” imitation foods — fake bread, fake pancakes, keto cookies. They keep your brain addicted to sweetness.
- Artificial sweeteners — they trick your body into releasing insulin even without real sugar.

The Dairy Question

Dairy is complicated. Some people do great with it; others don't.

If you tolerate dairy: Use it. Full-fat, grass-fed versions of milk, cheese, butter, and yogurt are rich in protein, healthy fat, and important minerals. Aged cheeses (like Parmesan and cheddar) are easiest to digest because the fermentation process removes most of the lactose (milk sugar) that causes problems.

If cow dairy bothers you: Try goat dairy. Goat milk, goat cheese, and goat whey protein are easier for many people to digest and taste perfectly normal.

If all dairy bothers you: Skip it entirely and replace it with bone broth, eggs, or collagen.

What to Drink

Water — This is your #1 drink. Aim for about half your body weight in ounces per day (so if you weigh 200 pounds, drink about 100 ounces of water). Add a pinch of sea salt or electrolytes if you're low-carb or fasting.

Coffee — Black, unsweetened, 2–3 cups max. Never within 8 hours of bedtime. You can add butter, ghee, or MCT oil for extra energy. No artificial creamers.

Tea — Green, black, herbal—all good. No sugar.

Bone broth — Counts as both a drink and a protein source. Great for fasting days or evenings.

Avoid: Soda (including diet), juice, energy drinks, sports drinks, flavored milks, and anything sweet. If it tastes sweet, assume it's messing with your insulin.

On alcohol: During your fat-loss phase, alcohol is a hard stop. It pauses fat burning, wrecks sleep, and raises cortisol (stress hormone). Once you're lean and metabolically healthy, an occasional drink won't kill you—but during the reset, leave it alone.

Your Zero Reactivity List (ZRL)

This is your most important tool from this chapter. It's a personal cheat sheet that tells you exactly which foods work for YOUR body.

The idea is simple: every body is different. A food that works great for me might make you feel terrible. The only way to know is to pay attention.

Here's how to build yours:

Step 1: Get a piece of paper or open a note on your phone. Divide it into four sections:

- **Green (Go):** Foods that make you feel great—steady energy, no bloating, clear head. Eat these daily.
- **Yellow (Caution):** Foods that sometimes work but sometimes don't. Use sparingly.
- **Red (Stop):** Foods that always make you feel bad—bloating, cravings, fatigue, brain fog. Never eat these.
- **Gray (Test):** Foods you haven't tried yet or aren't sure about.

Step 2: Start filling it in with foods you already eat regularly. Ask yourself: How do I feel 30 minutes after eating this? Two hours later? How do I sleep that night?

Step 3: To test a new food, eat it once (or twice) in a day, then take a few days off and watch for reactions. If nothing bad happens, it earns a spot on your Green list. If you feel bad, it goes to Yellow or Red.

Step 4: Keep this list where you can see it. Update it as you learn more about your body. This is a lifelong document—not a 30-day project.

Example:

- Green: Eggs, chicken breast, olive oil, avocado, blueberries, bone broth
- Yellow: Cheese (fine in small amounts, bloats if I have too much)
- Red: Bread, pasta, ice cream, cake
- Gray: Sweet potatoes, Greek yogurt, sardines (still testing)

Get started at ManVsHealth.com/zrl.

LEAN — The Power Keto Playbook

This is where you take action. Mean gave you the mindset. Clean gave you the food plan. Now Lean gives you the **engine** that burns the fat.

Everything in this chapter works toward one goal: **lower your insulin so your body can start burning its own stored fat.**

Quick Review: Why Insulin Matters

Let's do a super-fast recap using words anyone can understand:

- You eat food. Your blood sugar goes up.
- Your body releases **insulin** to move that sugar into cells.
- While insulin is high, **fat stays locked in your fat cells.** You cannot burn it.
- The more carbs and sugar you eat, the more insulin your body makes.
- Over time, your cells stop responding to insulin (**insulin resistance**), so your body makes even MORE insulin. Vicious cycle.

The fix: Eat fewer carbs. Eat at set times. Let insulin drop. Fat unlocks. You lose weight.

That's the whole game plan. Everything below is just the details of how to do it.

Energy Toxicity (Why You're Stuck)

Here's a term you need to know: **energy toxicity**. It means your body has more fuel coming in than it can handle.

Think of it like a bathtub. If the faucet is running faster than the drain can empty, the tub overflows. In your body, the overflow becomes fat—packed around your organs, stuffed into your liver, and spilling into your blood.

Energy toxicity happens for three reasons:

- 1. You're always eating.** Every meal, snack, and sip of sweetness triggers insulin. Your body never gets a break. The factory manager never leaves.
- 2. Inflammation.** Too much body fat (especially visceral fat) creates inflammatory chemicals that make your cells even more deaf to insulin.
- 3. Stress.** When you're stressed, your body dumps sugar into your blood to prepare for "fight or flight." More sugar = more insulin = more fat storage. One bad night of sleep can reduce your insulin sensitivity by 20–30%.

These three things feed each other in a loop. More eating → more fat → more inflammation → more insulin → more resistance → more fat. Round and round.

Power Keto breaks the loop. By cutting carbs, spacing out your meals, and moving your body, you drain the tub and give your system a chance to recover.

Measuring Body Fat

You need a starting point. Here are the simplest ways to measure your body fat:

DEXA scan — The gold standard. Uses low-dose X-rays. Most accurate (~2% error). Costs \$75–\$150. Great for a baseline reading.

Bod Pod — Very accurate, fast, available at some gyms. Costs \$40–\$75.

Skin calipers — Cheap (\$10–30), portable, good for tracking weekly trends at home.

Navy tape method — Free. Just need a tape measure. Less accurate, but better than nothing.

My suggestion: Get one DEXA or Bod Pod scan to set your baseline. Then use calipers or tape weekly to track direction. You're not chasing perfection—you're watching the trend.

Or skip the math entirely and use **The Man Plan** at ManVsHealth.com/the-man-plan—it calculates everything for you.

Power Keto: The Three Phases

Power Keto has three phases. You start at Phase 1 and only move to the next phase when your fat loss stalls for two honest weeks. “Honest” means you were actually following the plan, sleeping well, and moving your body—not just having a rough stretch.

Your target rate of fat loss: About 1–1.5 pounds per week (after the first couple of weeks, which may show faster loss due to water weight).

Phase 1: Fat Adaptation (Getting Your Body to Burn Fat)

What you're doing: Cutting carbs very low so your body switches from burning sugar to burning fat. This is the big shift.

How it works: When carbs go down, your blood sugar drops. When blood sugar drops, insulin drops. When insulin drops, your fat cells finally unlock. Your body starts pulling fat out of storage and converting it into fuel called **ketones**. This state is called **ketosis**.

What is ketosis? It's just a word that means your body is burning fat for fuel instead of sugar. That's it. Nothing scary. It's how humans survived for millions of years before grocery stores existed.

What you'll eat: High fat, high protein, very low carbs. The rough breakdown:

- If you're very active (heavy lifting 4–6x per week): 50% fat, 40% protein, 10% carbs
- If you're moderately active: 55% fat, 35% protein, 10% carbs
- If you're mostly sedentary: 60% fat, 30% protein, 10% carbs

Carb limit: No more than 50 grams of net carbs per day (net carbs = total carbs minus fiber). Aim for under 40 grams if you can.

What is net carbs? If a food has 20 grams of total carbs and 5 grams of fiber, the net carbs are 15 grams. Fiber doesn't spike insulin, so we subtract it.

What you'll feel: The first 1–2 weeks may be rough. Your body is switching fuel sources—like a car switching from gasoline to diesel. You might feel foggy, tired, or “off.” This is sometimes called the “keto flu,” and it's almost always caused by low electrolytes (salt, magnesium, potassium), not the diet itself. Drink more water, add sea salt, and take a magnesium supplement. It passes.

After 2–4 weeks, most men feel the “ketone edge”: steadier energy, fewer cravings, sharper focus, and a quiet appetite. That’s the sign it’s working.

Your Four Daily Fuelings

I don’t call them “meals” anymore. Meals are emotional—big plates, variety, celebration. **Fuelings** are simple, repeatable, and predictable. You eat the same thing most days, and it takes all the stress out of food decisions.

Here’s my daily plan:

Fueling 1 — Protein Opener (morning): 3 whole eggs with goat cheese, drizzled with avocado oil, plus chia seed pudding on the side.

Fueling 2 — Protein Smoothie (post-workout or midday): Frozen wild blueberries, goat whey protein, collagen, MCT oil, apple cider vinegar, psyllium husk, and goat milk blended with water.

Fueling 3 — Protein Peak (afternoon, biggest fueling): Chicken breast with avocado and shredded carrots, drizzled with olive oil.

Fueling 4 — Protein Closer (evening): Half cup of cottage cheese plus bone broth. The casein in cottage cheese digests slowly overnight, feeding your muscles while you sleep.

Why four? Three meals leave long gaps where muscle repair slows down. Six meals means you’re always eating (and always triggering insulin). Four is the sweet spot: enough protein pulses to keep your muscles fed, with enough breaks for insulin to drop between fuelings.

Your protein target: About 0.8–1 gram per pound of your goal body weight, spread across those four fuelings. So if your goal weight is 180 pounds, aim for 144–180 grams of protein per day, split into 35–45 grams per fueling.

Carb Refeed Day (Once Per Week)

What it is: One day per week where you eat more carbs (about 20–25% of your calories from carbs instead of the usual 10%). This is NOT a cheat day. You eat clean carbs—fruit, potatoes, a spoon of raw honey—not pizza and cake.

When to start: Day 14 of Phase 1 (give yourself two weeks of strict low-carb first).

Why it works:

- **Refills your muscles' energy reserves** (glycogen), so your workouts feel strong.
- **Tells your body it's not starving.** When carbs have been very low for a while, certain hormones (like leptin and thyroid) start slowing your metabolism. A carb refeed says “relax, food is available” and keeps your metabolism humming.
- **Keeps your body flexible.** On strict standard keto, your body can “forget” how to handle carbs. By cycling carbs in once a week, you stay metabolically flexible—able to burn both fat and sugar efficiently.
- **Gives you a mental break.** Knowing a refeed day is coming makes the strict days much easier to handle.

The rules: On refeed day, lower your fat intake a bit to make room for the extra carbs. Keep protein the same. Stick to foods from your Green list. This is fuel, not reward.

You'll temporarily leave ketosis after a refeed. That's normal and expected. Most men are back in ketosis within 24–72 hours.

Phase 2: Tighten (When Fat Loss Stalls)

When to start Phase 2: After two consecutive weeks of no fat loss, despite following Phase 1 honestly.

What changes:

- **Slight calorie reduction.** You're now eating a little less than your body burns. Think staircase, not cliff—a modest reduction, not starvation.
- **Push-Flush days (1–2 per week, never back-to-back).** On these days, you push protein high and flush fat low. The idea: since your body is now fat-adapted, by removing dietary fat for a day, you force your body to burn its own stored fat for energy. Macros on Push-Flush: 10% fat, 70% protein, 20% carbs.
- **Start resistance training.** If you haven't already, this is when you start lifting weights. Even 15 minutes of bodyweight exercises or dumbbells at home makes a huge difference. Muscle is your metabolic engine—the more you have, the more fat you burn even at rest.

Check out our Push-Pull-Power (PPP) program at ManVsHealth.com/ppp.

Phase 3: Intermittent Fasting (Timing Lever)

When to start Phase 3: After two consecutive weeks of no fat loss in Phase 2.

What is intermittent fasting (IF)? It's simply going longer between your last meal and your first meal. You're not starving yourself—you're just adjusting WHEN you eat, not HOW MUCH.

How to ease in: Start with a 12-hour gap (finish dinner at 7 PM, eat breakfast at 7 AM). Gradually extend to 14 hours, then 16 hours. The goal is 16 hours of fasting with an 8-hour eating window, done 2–3 times per week.

Example: Finish your last fueling at 4 PM. Don't eat again until 8 AM. That's 16 hours. Sleep accounts for most of it.

Will you lose muscle? No. Not if you're eating enough protein during your eating window. Your body has plenty of stored fat to burn—it won't touch your muscle unless you're starving for extended periods.

When NOT to fast: If you're sick, extremely stressed, or sleeping poorly. Fasting under stress can backfire.

When to Advance Phases (Summary)

Phase 1 → Phase 2: Two honest weeks with no fat loss.

Phase 2 → Phase 3: Two more honest weeks with no fat loss.

Stalling in Phase 3: Go to the MACHINE chapter for additional tools.

Remember: Most stalls aren't your biology failing. They're small mistakes adding up—hidden carbs, portion creep, skipped workouts, poor sleep. Tighten the basics first before assuming you need a bigger change.

Your Launch Checklist

Here's exactly how to start:

Step 1: Get your numbers. Go to ManVsHealth.com/the-man-plan, enter your measurements, and

let it calculate your daily macros (how much protein, fat, and carbs to eat).

Step 2: Plan your four fuelings. Pick four times you'll eat each day. Assign your Opener, Smoothie, Peak, and Closer. Pre-count your portions once, then repeat the same day.

Step 3: Plan your carb refeed. Pick one day per week. Use only Green list foods. This starts on Day 14.

Step 4: Track weekly. Weigh yourself and measure your waist once per week, same conditions each time. Enter the numbers into your spreadsheet or The Man Plan.

Step 5: Move. If you're already exercising, keep going (don't increase intensity the first two weeks). If not, walk. Aim for 10,000 steps per day (about 100 minutes total). 1,000 steps \approx 10 minutes.

Step 6: Sign your Self-Contract. You should now be able to fill in your goal body fat %, weekly loss rate, and target date.

Then execute. Follow your fuelings. Track weekly. Stay hydrated. Repeat.

This system is mathematical. If you follow it precisely, you **will** lose fat. It's as certain as gravity.

MACHINE — Keep It Going for Life

You've done the hard work. Your mind is right (Mean). Your food is clean (Clean). Your metabolism is working again (Lean).

Now you maintain the machine.

This chapter covers what happens after you've fixed your insulin resistance, plus the eight "levers" you can pull when something feels off.

From Insulin Resistant to Insulin Sensitive

Here's the exciting news: your body can recover.

Your liver heals first. Within days of eating low-carb, your liver stops overproducing sugar. Insulin starts dropping. You begin burning stored fat.

Your muscles take longer. Muscles are where most of your blood sugar gets used. They heal over 8–12 weeks with nutrition alone—faster if you add weight training.

How you'll know you're healed:

- Smaller waist
- Deeper sleep
- Steady energy all day
- You're no longer hungry all the time
- Sharper focus
- Workouts feel good instead of draining

If you get blood work done, look for: fasting insulin under 8, HOMA-IR under 2.0, triglycerides going down, HDL going up.

Power Play: After Insulin Is Fixed

Once your insulin resistance is gone, it's time for the next stage: **Power Play**. The goal is to push your body fat down to 15%—the sweet spot where your hormones, energy, and appearance all line up.

The big shift: Since your body can now access its own fat stores, you don't need to eat as much dietary fat. Instead, protein goes up to protect your muscles during the deficit, and carbs ease up a bit (especially around training).

Power Play macros (approximate):

- Very active: 25% fat / 45% protein / 30% carbs
- Moderately active: 30% fat / 45% protein / 25% carbs
- Sedentary: 35% fat / 45% protein / 20% carbs

More details at ManVsHealth.com/power-play.

Power Flex: Maintenance for Life

Once you've hit 15% body fat and your numbers are stable, you graduate to **Power Flex**—the maintenance phase. This is earned flexibility. Carbs come up more, protein settles to 30%, and fat fills in the rest.

Power Flex macros (approximate):

- Very active: 40% fat / 30% protein / 30% carbs
- Moderately active: 35% fat / 30% protein / 35% carbs

- Sedentary: 30% fat / 30% protein / 40% carbs

The non-negotiables that never change: Clean eating (Zero Reactivity list), resistance training 3–4 times per week, good sleep, and weekly weigh-ins. If your weight drifts up 5+ pounds, tighten back to Power Play for two weeks.

More details at ManVsHealth.com/power-flex.

The 8 Levers: Your Troubleshooting Guide

When something isn't working, don't panic. Work through these levers one at a time, in order. Most problems are solved by the first three.

Lever 1: Fitness — Move More, Lift Weights

Phase 1 goal: Walk. Aim for 10,000 steps per day. Walk after meals, walk during phone calls, walk with your family.

Phase 2 goal: Start lifting weights. 3–4 sessions per week of basic compound exercises: squats, presses, rows, deadlifts. Even 15 minutes at home with dumbbells counts. Check out our Push-Pull-Power program at ManVsHealth.com/ppp.

Phase 3 goal: Add some cardio if you want—swimming, cycling, rowing, or short high-intensity workouts. Keep the weights. Keep walking.

Why this is Lever 1: Muscle is your body's biggest fat-burning engine. More muscle = more fat burned, even while sitting on the couch. Nutrition gets you 80% there; fitness gives you the other 20%.

Lever 2: Carbs — Tighten Up Temporarily

If fat loss stalls, drop carbs to under 20 grams per day for 1–2 weeks. Double-check everything you’re eating. Most stalls are math errors—hidden carbs in sauces, portion drift, or snack creep.

Once the weight starts moving again, you can bring carbs back up to your normal range (around 40–50 grams).

You can use a blood ketone meter (like Keto-Mojo) to confirm you’re in ketosis, but it’s optional. The scale and mirror usually tell you what you need to know.

Lever 3: Reactivities — Check for Irritants

If you’re feeling bloated, foggy, or off, check three things:

1. Hydration. Are you drinking enough water? On keto, your body loses water faster. Aim for about 0.6–0.7 ounces per pound of body weight per day. Add electrolytes: sea salt, magnesium, potassium.

2. Fiber. Constipation is common on low-carb diets. Aim for 30–38 grams of fiber per day from sources like chia seeds, psyllium husk, blueberries, avocado, and carrots. A daily “Chia Pudding” recipe: 1 tablespoon chia seeds + ¼ cup milk, stir, refrigerate overnight, eat in the morning.

3. Your Zero Reactivity List. Go back and re-evaluate. Maybe a food you marked as Green is actually causing problems. Be honest. Update your list.

Lever 4: Stress — Lower Your Cortisol

What is cortisol? It’s your stress hormone. When you’re stressed, cortisol tells your body to dump sugar into your blood for quick energy (the old “fight or flight” response). More sugar = more insulin = more fat storage.

Modern life keeps cortisol high all the time—work pressure, money worries, screens, bad sleep, too much caffeine.

How to lower it: Simplify your environment. Turn off the news. Get outside for sunlight and fresh air. Walk barefoot on grass. Meditate, pray, or just sit still for a few minutes. Laugh with friends. Journal your thoughts. Cut caffeine to 2–3 cups max, and never after mid-afternoon.

The bottom line: You can't grind your way to being lean. You have to calm your way there. Stress undoes everything.

Lever 5: Sleep — Non-Negotiable

Poor sleep is a silent killer of fat loss. One bad night can cut your insulin sensitivity by 20–30%. Chronic bad sleep tanks your testosterone, raises hunger hormones, and keeps cortisol high.

Sleep rules:

- **7–8 hours minimum.** No exceptions.
- **No caffeine within 8 hours of bed.**
- **No food within 3 hours of bed.** Digestion messes up sleep quality.
- **No screens within 1 hour of bed.** Blue light from phones and TVs kills melatonin (your sleep hormone).
- **Cool, dark room.** 65–68°F is ideal. Blackout curtains. No LED lights.
- **Same bedtime every night.** Your body likes routine.

Treat sleep like a meeting you can't cancel.

Lever 6: Hormones — Test, Don't Guess

If you've done everything right for 6+ months and still feel off—low energy, no sex drive, stubborn fat—you may have a hormonal issue.

The five hormones that matter most:

- 1. Thyroid** — controls your metabolism's speed. Low thyroid = fatigue, weight gain, brain fog.
- 2. Insulin** — you know this one. The gatekeeper of fat storage.
- 3. Cortisol** — the stress hormone. Too much = belly fat and exhaustion.
- 4. Testosterone** — the builder. Controls muscle, drive, mood, and confidence. Declines about 1% per year after 30, faster with bad habits.
- 5. Estrogen** — yes, men need some too. But too much (from excess body fat, alcohol, or chemicals in plastics) makes you soft and sluggish.

What to do: Ask your doctor for a hormone panel: fasting insulin, thyroid (full panel, not just TSH), total and free testosterone, estradiol, cortisol, and Vitamin D. Use the numbers to guide smart decisions, not to panic.

If lifestyle changes aren't enough, medical optimization (like TRT) may help—but only after you've fixed the basics. See ManVsHealth.com/medical.

Lever 7: Deficiencies — The Fine-Tuning

Most men don't stall because of a missing vitamin. But once the big stuff is dialed in, small deficiencies can make a difference.

The top three to watch:

Vitamin D — most men are low, especially if you work indoors. Take 2,000–5,000 IU of D3 daily with vitamin K2. Get your blood levels checked (aim for 40–70 ng/mL).

Magnesium — helps with sleep, muscle cramps, and stress. Take 300–400 mg of magnesium glycinate before bed.

Zinc — important for testosterone and immune function. 10–25 mg of zinc daily, especially if you don't eat much red meat or shellfish.

Other things to watch: Potassium (eat avocados and bone broth), omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil or sardines), B vitamins, and electrolytes (sea salt—don't fear salt on keto, you need 3–5 grams of sodium daily).

Get a micronutrient panel once or twice a year. Supplement precisely, not randomly. A targeted approach beats a generic multivitamin every time.

Lever 8: Environment — Reduce Toxin Exposure

This is the last lever because it's the most subtle. If everything else is dialed in and you still feel off, look at your environment:

Air: Replace HVAC filters regularly. Open windows daily. Skip synthetic air fresheners and scented candles.

Water: Use a good filter (carbon block or reverse osmosis). Ditch plastic water bottles—use glass or stainless steel.

Products: Switch to unscented or natural soap, shampoo, and deodorant. Many conventional products contain chemicals that mimic estrogen in your body.

Plastics: Never microwave food in plastic. Store food in glass or stainless steel containers.

Light: Get morning sunlight on your eyes (no sunglasses) for 10 minutes. Dim lights after sunset. Keep your bedroom dark.

Mold: If you live in a humid area and have mystery symptoms (fatigue, allergies, sinus issues), consider getting your home tested.

You don't need to be paranoid. Just make simple swaps and reduce the load on your body.

Common Questions (Straight Answers)

“I cook for a big family. What do I do?”

Make your plate first. You can sit at the same table and eat different food. Your family will respect you more when they see you getting healthier.

“Can I ever have dessert?”

Once or twice a year—not once or twice a week. A thin slice of something good. Enjoy it and move on. Don’t make it a regular negotiation.

“What about eating out?”

Order lean protein with extra butter or olive oil. Skip the bread basket. Avoid sauces (most restaurant sauces use seed oils). Grilled steak, roasted chicken, or salmon with a side of roots or veggies = easy win.

“This sounds restrictive.”

It’s not restriction—it’s clarity. You’re not giving things up. You’re trading them for a body and life you actually want. That’s freedom, not deprivation.

“I travel a lot.”

Pack protein: jerky, hard-boiled eggs, canned sardines, protein powder. Bring sea salt and electrolyte packets. At airports, find the protein. Skip the carbs. Fasting through a travel day is often easier than navigating bad food.

“My spouse keeps sabotaging me.”

Have a direct conversation. Ask for specific support. If they won't budge, create separation—keep your foods separate, prepare your own meals. Lead by example, not argument. When you start looking and feeling better, the resistance usually fades.

“How do I handle parties?”

Eat before you go. At the event, find the protein (meat, cheese, eggs). Skip the bread and dessert. Hold a drink (sparkling water or black coffee) so nobody bugs you. “No thanks, I'm good” is a complete sentence.

“I stalled. Now what?”

Work the levers in order: 1) Fitness, 2) Tighten carbs, 3) Check reactivities, 4) Manage stress, 5) Fix sleep, 6) Test hormones, 7) Check deficiencies, 8) Clean up environment.

“How do I maintain once I hit my goal?”

Stay in Phase 3. Use Power Flex macros. Keep lifting. Keep your Zero Reactivity list updated. Weigh in weekly. If you drift up 5+ pounds, tighten back to Power Play for two weeks.

“What about medications like Ozempic or Metformin?”

Metformin helps your cells respond better to insulin—it's generally safe and useful as a bridge. GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic suppress appetite but can create dependency if you don't change your habits. Use medications as a bridge to lifestyle change, not a permanent crutch.

“Do I need to be in ketosis forever?”

No. The goal isn't to live in ketosis permanently. The goal is **metabolic flexibility**—the ability to burn fat OR sugar

efficiently. Power Keto cycles you in and out of ketosis on purpose, so your body learns to be a flexible fuel machine. Once you're lean and healthy, you can eat more carbs without gaining it back.

Glossary: Every Word You Need to Know

If you come across a word in this book that confuses you, look it up here. I've defined everything in the simplest terms possible.

Acanthosis Nigricans

Dark, velvety patches of skin, usually on the neck or armpits. A visible sign that your insulin is too high.

Alpha Cells

Cells in your pancreas that release glucagon (the hormone that tells your body to release stored sugar for energy). They work opposite to beta cells.

Anti-Nutrients

Natural chemicals in plants (like lectins and oxalates) that can irritate your gut, block mineral absorption, and cause inflammation. Found mostly in leaves, stems, grains, and legumes. Cooking reduces them.

Beta Cells

Cells in your pancreas that make insulin. When you eat, they release insulin to move sugar out of your blood and into your cells.

Body Fat Percentage (BF%)

The percentage of your total body weight that is fat. Example: if you weigh 200 lbs and your BF% is 25%, you have 50 lbs of fat and 150 lbs of everything else (muscle, bone, water, organs). The goal is 15% for most men.

Caloric Deficit

When you eat fewer calories than your body burns in a day. This forces your body to pull the extra energy from stored fat. It's how you lose weight.

Carb Refeed

A planned day (once per week) where you eat more carbs than usual from clean sources like fruits, potatoes, or honey. Not a cheat day. It keeps your metabolism flexible and prevents your body from thinking it's starving.

Casein

A protein found in dairy (especially cottage cheese) that digests very slowly. Great for your evening fueling because it feeds your muscles all night while you sleep.

Collagen

A protein that makes up your joints, skin, gut lining, and connective tissue. Found in bone broth and collagen supplements. Good for joint health and gut repair.

Cortisol

Your body's main stress hormone. In small bursts, it's helpful (gives you energy in emergencies). When it stays high from chronic stress, poor sleep, or too much caffeine, it causes belly fat, muscle loss, and insulin resistance.

DEXA Scan

A type of body scan (low-dose X-ray) that measures your body fat percentage very accurately. Costs \$75–\$150. The gold standard for measuring body composition.

Energy Toxicity

When your body has more fuel (food energy) coming in than it can use. The overflow gets stored as fat, overwhelms your organs, and causes insulin resistance. Think of it like an overflowing bathtub.

Estradiol (E2)

The main form of estrogen. Men need some, but too much (from excess body fat or chemicals in plastics) causes sluggishness, mood swings, and muscle loss.

Fat Adaptation (Fat-Adapted)

The state where your body has learned to efficiently burn fat for fuel instead of relying on sugar. Takes 2–4 weeks of low-carb eating. You'll know you're there when your energy is steady, cravings disappear, and you can go hours without feeling hungry.

Fasting Insulin

The level of insulin in your blood after not eating for 8–12 hours. Ideal is under 8 (preferably 4–6). High fasting insulin means your body is constantly in storage mode, even when you're not eating.

Fiber

The part of plant foods your body can't digest. It helps you have regular bowel movements, feeds good gut bacteria, and slows sugar absorption. Good sources: chia seeds, psyllium husk, berries, avocado.

Fueling

My word for a meal. “Meals” are emotional and variable. “Fuelings” are simple, repeatable, and predictable. You eat the same four fuelings each day to remove decision fatigue.

GKI (Glucose Ketone Index)

A calculation that tells you how deeply you're burning fat.

Formula: $(\text{blood glucose} \div 18) \div \text{blood ketones}$. A score of 3–6 means solid fat-burning. Optional—the scale and mirror usually tell you enough.

Glucagon

A hormone (opposite of insulin) that tells your body to release stored sugar and fat for energy. When insulin drops, glucagon rises. That's when fat burning happens.

Gluconeogenesis

When your body converts protein (amino acids) into sugar. This can happen when you eat way too much protein at once. That's why protein is spread across four fuelings instead of one giant meal.

Glycogen

Your body's short-term sugar storage, kept in your liver and muscles. Think of it as a reserve tank. When glycogen is full, extra sugar gets converted to fat. When glycogen is empty (from exercise or fasting), your body starts burning fat.

HOMA-IR

A blood test score that measures insulin resistance. Calculated as: $(\text{fasting glucose} \times \text{fasting insulin}) \div 405$. Under 1.0 is ideal. Over 2.0 means your metabolism is struggling.

Inflammation (Chronic)

Your body's defense system stuck in "on" mode. Short-term inflammation is good (it fights infections). But when it never turns

off—from bad food, stress, or excess body fat—it damages your cells, clogs your arteries, and makes insulin resistance worse.

Insulin

A hormone made by your pancreas. Its job is to move sugar out of your blood and into your cells. When it's high, your body stores fat and can't burn it. When it's low, fat burning begins. The most important hormone in this entire book.

Insulin Resistance (IR)

When your cells stop responding to insulin properly. Like a lock that's gotten rusty—insulin keeps trying to open the door, but it takes more and more effort. Your body makes more and more insulin to compensate, which keeps fat locked up even tighter.

Insulin Sensitivity

The opposite of insulin resistance. When your cells respond well to insulin, you need less of it. Less insulin = easier fat burning, better energy, clearer thinking. This is the goal.

Intermittent Fasting (IF)

Going longer than usual between meals on purpose. The most common pattern: eating within an 8-hour window and fasting for 16 hours (most of which you're asleep). It lowers insulin exposure and accelerates fat burning.

Keto Flu

Feeling tired, foggy, or headachy during the first week or two of low-carb eating. It's almost always caused by low electrolytes (salt, magnesium, potassium), NOT the diet itself. Fix: drink more water with sea salt and take magnesium. It passes.

Ketones

Fuel molecules your liver makes from fat when carbs are very low. Your brain and muscles can run on ketones very efficiently. When your body is making ketones, you're in ketosis—which means you're burning fat.

Ketosis

The metabolic state where your body is burning fat for fuel and producing ketones. This happens naturally when carbs are kept very low. It's not dangerous—it's how humans survived for millions of years.

LBM (Lean Body Mass)

Everything in your body that ISN'T fat: muscle, bones, organs, water. Calculated as: body weight minus fat mass. You want this number to stay the same (or go up) while your fat mass goes down.

Lectins

Natural chemicals in plants (especially grains, beans, and raw vegetables) that act as defense mechanisms. They can irritate your gut lining and trigger inflammation. Cooking destroys most of them.

Leptin

The “I'm full” hormone. When working properly, it tells your brain you've had enough food. In insulin resistance, leptin stops working correctly, so you never feel satisfied. Fixing insulin fixes leptin.

Macros (Macronutrients)

The three big categories of food energy: **Protein** (builds muscle), **Fat** (provides energy), and **Carbohydrates** (quick fuel that

spikes insulin). On Power Keto, you track these as percentages of your daily calories.

MCT Oil

Medium-Chain Triglycerides—a type of fat extracted from coconut oil that your body converts to energy very quickly. Boosts brain function and ketone production. I add 1 tablespoon to my daily smoothie.

Metabolic Flexibility

The ability of your body to smoothly switch between burning sugar and burning fat as fuel, depending on what's available. This is the ultimate goal—not permanent ketosis, but flexible metabolism.

mTOR

A signal inside your cells that tells them to build and repair muscle. Protein triggers mTOR. It's why eating protein regularly is essential for keeping muscle as you age.

Net Carbs

Total carbs minus fiber. Since fiber doesn't spike insulin, we subtract it. Example: food with 20g total carbs and 5g fiber = 15g net carbs. On Power Keto, aim for under 50g net carbs per day.

Oxalates

Crystals found in many vegetables (spinach, kale, beets) that can cause kidney stones and block mineral absorption in some people. Another reason to cook your veggies rather than eating them raw.

Pancreas

An organ behind your stomach that makes insulin (and other hormones). When you eat too many carbs for too long, your pancreas gets overworked trying to keep up with insulin demand.

Polyphenols

Powerful compounds in colorful plant foods (berries, dark chocolate, olive oil) that fight inflammation and feed good gut bacteria. Wild blueberries are one of the best sources.

Power Keto

The modified ketogenic diet in this book. Unlike standard keto (which is very strict and hard to maintain), Power Keto includes higher protein, weekly carb refeeds, three progressive phases, and is designed to be sustainable for real life.

Push-Flush Day

A special day (1–2 per week in Phase 2) where you eat very high protein and very low fat. Since you're fat-adapted, removing dietary fat forces your body to burn its own stored fat. Macros: 10% fat / 70% protein / 20% carbs.

RMR (Resting Metabolic Rate)

The number of calories your body burns just to stay alive (breathing, heartbeat, brain function) without any movement. This is your baseline. Everything you do on top of that burns more.

Seed Oils

Industrial vegetable oils (soybean, corn, canola, sunflower, safflower, cottonseed) that are highly processed and cause inflammation. They're in almost every packaged food and restaurant. Avoid them completely.

Subcutaneous Fat

The fat just under your skin that you can pinch. It's the love handles and belly pouch. Annoying, but mostly harmless compared to visceral fat.

TDEE (Total Daily Energy Expenditure)

The total number of calories you burn in a day, including your resting metabolism plus all activity. Your food intake is set relative to this number.

Testosterone

The primary male hormone. Controls muscle mass, sex drive, mood, energy, bone density, and confidence. Declines about 1% per year after age 30. Improved by sleep, weight training, healthy fat intake, and low insulin.

TRT (Testosterone Replacement Therapy)

Medical treatment for men with clinically low testosterone. Should only be considered after lifestyle changes have been fully implemented for 6+ months. Must be supervised by a qualified doctor.

Visceral Fat

The dangerous fat hidden deep inside your belly, wrapping around your organs (liver, heart, pancreas). You can't see it or pinch it. It causes inflammation, raises blood pressure, and drives diseases. Reducing insulin is the primary way to lose it.

Xenoestrogens

Man-made chemicals (found in plastics, personal care products, and pesticides) that mimic estrogen in your body. They disrupt

your hormone balance, lower testosterone, and promote fat storage. Avoid by choosing glass over plastic and using natural products.

Zero Reactivity

The goal of eating only foods that your body handles calmly—no bloating, no cravings, no brain fog, no energy crashes. Your Zero Reactivity List (ZRL) is your personal cheat sheet for which foods work for your body and which don't.

ZRL (Zero Reactivity List)

Your personal four-zone food list: Green (eat daily), Yellow (use carefully), Red (never eat), and Gray (still testing). This is your lifelong document for food decisions.

You Are a Mean Clean Lean Machine

If you've made it this far, you have everything you need.

The system is simple:

Get your mind right (Mean). **Eat real food** (Clean). **Lower your insulin and burn fat** (Lean). **Maintain it for life** (Machine).

You don't need another guru, another gadget, or another miracle pill. You need to do the work—consistently, precisely, and without negotiating with yourself.

Two weeks to feel the change. Eight weeks to prove it. A lifetime to enjoy it.

If you want help, we're here:

- **The Man Plan** (free automated system):
ManVsHealth.com/the-man-plan
- **JumpStart Session** (one-time coaching):
ManVsHealth.com/jumpstart
- **Ongoing Coaching**: ManVsHealth.com/optimizing
- **Medical Optimization**: ManVsHealth.com/medical

Now get to work.

— Paul Diehl

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