

Since April 2009, hundreds of thousands of people have successfully completed our Whole30 program with amazing results. This is a summary of the official rules of the Whole30[®]. For more detailed information, refer to our New York Times bestselling book, [It Starts With Food](#).

What is the Whole30[®]?

Certain food groups (like sugar, grains, dairy and legumes) could be having a negative impact on your health and fitness without you even realizing it. Are your energy levels inconsistent or non-existent? Do you have aches and pains that can't be explained by over-use or injury? Are you having a hard time losing weight no matter how hard you try? Do you have some sort of condition (like skin issues, digestive ailments, seasonal allergies or fertility issues) that medication hasn't helped? These symptoms may be directly related to the foods you eat – even the “healthy” stuff. So how do you know if (and how) these foods are affecting you?

Strip them from your diet completely. Cut out all the psychologically unhealthy, hormone-unbalancing, gut-disrupting, inflammatory food groups for a full 30 days. Let your body heal and recover from whatever effects those foods may be causing. Push the “reset” button with your metabolism, systemic inflammation, and the downstream effects of the food choices you've been making. Learn once and for all how the foods you've been eating are actually affecting your day to day life, and your long term health. The most important reason to keep reading?

This will change your life.

We cannot possibly put enough emphasis on this simple fact—the next 30 days will change your life. It will change the way you think about food, it will change your tastes, it will change your habits and your cravings. It could, quite possibly, change the emotional relationship you have with food, and with your body. It has the potential to change the way you eat for the rest of your life. We know this because we did it, and tens of thousands of people have done it since, and it changed our lives (and their lives) in a very permanent fashion.

The Whole30 Program Rules

Yes: Eat real food.

Eat meat, seafood, eggs, tons of vegetables, some fruit, and plenty of good fats from fruits, oils, nuts and seeds. Eat foods with very few ingredients, all pronounceable ingredients, or better yet, no ingredients listed at all because they're totally natural and unprocessed.

No: Avoid for 30 days.

More importantly, here's what NOT to eat during the duration of your Whole30 program. Omitting all of these foods and beverages will help you regain your healthy metabolism, reduce systemic inflammation, and help you discover how these foods are truly impacting your health, fitness and quality of life.

- **Do not consume added sugar of any kind, real or artificial.** No maple syrup, honey, agave nectar, coconut sugar, Splenda, Equal, Nutrasweet, xylitol, stevia, etc. Read your labels, because companies sneak sugar into products in ways you might not recognize.
- **Do not consume alcohol, in any form, not even for cooking.** (And it should go without saying, but no tobacco products of any sort, either.)
- **Do not eat grains.** This includes (but is not limited to) wheat, rye, barley, oats, corn, rice, millet, bulgur, sorghum, amaranth, buckwheat, sprouted grains and all of those gluten-free pseudo-grains like quinoa. This also includes all the ways we add wheat, corn and rice into our foods in the form of bran, germ, starch and so on. Again, read your labels.
- **Do not eat legumes.** This includes beans of all kinds (black, red, pinto, navy, white, kidney, lima, fava, etc.), peas, chickpeas, lentils, and peanuts. No peanut butter, either. This also includes all forms of soy – soy sauce, miso, tofu, tempeh, edamame, and all the ways we sneak soy into foods (like lecithin).
- **Do not eat dairy.** This includes cow, goat or sheep's milk products such as cream, cheese (hard or soft), kefir, yogurt (even Greek), and sour cream... with the exception of clarified butter or ghee. (See below for details.)
- **Do not consume carrageenan, MSG or sulfites.** If these ingredients appear in any form on the label of your processed food or beverage, it's out for the Whole30.
- **Do not try to re-create baked goods, junk foods, or treats* with "approved" ingredients.** Continuing to eat your old, unhealthy foods made with Whole30 ingredients is totally missing the point, and will tank your results faster than you can say "Paleo Pop-Tarts." Remember, these are the same foods that got you into health-trouble in the first place—and a pancake is still a pancake, regardless of the ingredients.

One last and final rule:

You are not allowed to step on the scale or take any body measurements for the duration of the program.

This is about so much more than just weight loss, and to focus on your body composition means you'll miss out on the most dramatic and lifelong benefits this plan has to offer. So, no weighing yourself, analyzing body fat or taking comparative measurements during your Whole30. (We do encourage you to weigh yourself before and after, however, so you can see one of the more tangible results of your efforts when your program is over.)

**A few off-limits foods that fall under this rule include pancakes, bread, tortillas, biscuits, muffins, cupcakes, cookies, pizza crust, waffles, cereal, potato chips, French fries, and this one recipe where eggs, date paste, and coconut milk are combined with prayers to create a thick, creamy concoction that can once again transform your undrinkable black coffee into sweet, dreamy caffeine. However, this list is not limited to these items—there may be other foods that you find are not psychologically healthy for your Whole30. Use your best judgment with those foods that aren't on this list, but that you suspect are not helping you change your habits or break those cravings.*

The Fine Print

These foods are exceptions to the rule, and are allowed during your Whole30.

- **Clarified Butter or Ghee.** Clarified butter or ghee is the only source of dairy allowed during your Whole30. Plain old butter is NOT allowed, as the milk proteins found in non-clarified butter could impact the results of your program. Refer to our [Butter Manifesto](#) for more details on the milk proteins found in butter, purchasing high quality butter, and how to clarify it yourself.
- **Fruit juice as a sweetener.** Some products or recipes will include fruit as a sweetener, which is fine for the purposes of the Whole30. (We have to draw the line somewhere.)
- **Certain legumes.** We're fine with green beans, sugar snap peas and snow peas. While they're technically a legume, these are far more "pod" than "bean," and green plant matter is generally good for you.
- **Vinegar.** Most forms of vinegar, including white, balsamic, apple cider, red wine, and rice, are allowed during your Whole30 program. The only exceptions are vinegars with added sugar, or malt vinegar, which generally contains gluten.
- **Salt.** Did you know that all iodized table salt contains sugar? Sugar (often in the form of dextrose) is chemically essential to keep the potassium iodide from oxidizing and being lost. Because all restaurant and pre-packaged foods contain salt, we're making salt an exception to our "no added sugar" rule.

Give Us Thirty Days

Your only job during the Whole30 is to focus on making good food choices. You don't need to weigh or measure, you don't need to count calories, you don't need to stress about organic, grass-fed, pastured or free range. Just figure out how to stick to the Whole30 in any setting, around every special circumstance, under any amount of stress... for 30 straight days. Your only job? Eat. Good. Food.

The only way this will work is if you give it the full thirty days: no cheats, slips, or "special occasions." This isn't us playing the tough guy. This is a fact, born of education and experience. You need such a small amount of any of these inflammatory foods to break the healing cycle—one bite of pizza, one splash of milk in your coffee, one lick of the spoon mixing the batter within the 30 day period and you've broken the "reset" button, requiring you to start over again on Day 1.

You must commit to the full program, exactly as written. Anything less and we make no promises for your results, or the chances of your success. Anything less and you are selling yourself—and your potential results—short.

It's only 30 days.

It's For Your Own Good

Here comes the tough love. This is for those of you who are considering taking on this life-changing month, but aren't sure you can actually pull it off, cheat free, for a full 30 days. This is for the people who have tried this before, but who "slipped" or "fell off the wagon" or "just HAD to eat (fill in food here) because of this (fill in event here)." This is for you.

- **It is not hard.** Don't you dare tell us this is hard. Beating cancer is hard. Birthing a baby is hard. Losing a parent is hard. Drinking your coffee black. Is. Not. Hard. You've done harder things than this, and you have no excuse not to complete the program as written. It's only thirty days, and it's for the most important health cause on earth—the only physical body you will ever have in this lifetime.
- **Don't even consider the possibility of a "slip."** Unless you physically tripped and your face landed in a pizza, there is no "slip." You make a choice to eat something unhealthy. It is always a choice, so do not phrase it as if you had an accident. Commit to the program 100% for the full 30 days. Don't give yourself an excuse to fail before you've even begun.
- **You never, ever, ever have to eat anything you don't want to eat.** You're all big boys and girls. Toughen up. Learn to say no (or make your mom proud and say, "No, thank you"). Learn to stick up for yourself. Just because it's your sister's birthday, or your best friend's wedding, or your company picnic does not mean you have to eat anything. It's always a choice, and we would hope that you stopped succumbing to peer pressure in 7th grade.
- **This does require a bit of effort.** Grocery shopping, meal planning, dining out, explaining the program to friends and family, and dealing with stress will all prove challenging at some point during your program. We've given you tools, guidelines and resources, but take responsibility for your own plan. Improved health, fitness, and quality of life doesn't happen automatically just because you're now taking a pass on bread.
- **You can do this.** You've come too far to back out now. You want to do this. You need to do this. And we believe that you can do this. So stop thinking about it, and start doing. Right now, this very minute, tell someone that you are starting the Whole30.

In Conclusion...

We want you to participate. We want you to take this seriously, and see amazing results in unexpected areas. Even if you don't believe this will actually change your life, if you're willing to give it 30 short days, do it. It is that important. We believe in it that much. It changed our lives, and we want it to change yours too.

Welcome to the Whole30.