

Overcoming a Progress Plateau

Here are some strategies to try if you are experiencing a progress plateau. Remember that AH is about creating a lifestyle that supports metabolic health. We see weight loss as a happy side effect to nourishing your body well. While weight loss may be a goal of yours, take some time to recognize other benefits that may be better indicators of your metabolic health (ie: hunger, cravings, energy levels, and overall sense of wellbeing).

The following pages describe scenarios that you may be experiencing. We have provided some strategies to try based on which scenario you have encountered. In addition to these strategies, it is important to keep in contact with your doctor and speak to them about your weight concerns.

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Situation	What's Going On?	Try This...
Not hungry in the morning, starved in the afternoon, before bed, or during the night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not enough satisfying food during the day ● Not enough fat in your meals ● Not enough protein in your meals ● Inconsistent meals or meal timing 	<p>Try increasing your breakfast and lunch portion sizes (start small and see how you feel). A typical breakfast (for most people) ranges between 400-550 calories. Double check to ensure you are getting 3-5 ounces of cooked protein, enough fat to complement your protein (see our meal building guides on our website here >>), and ½ cup (minimum) of slow carbohydrates. If possible, add some non-starchy vegetables to your meal as well to increase fiber and to use as a “vehicle” for the fat.</p> <p>PRO TIP: Add a higher fiber fat such as flax seeds or chia seeds to see if they help curb hunger later in the day.</p>
Low in energy around 3-5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blood sugar dips ● Possible lack of fat, protein, or slow carbs in breakfast or lunch ● Inconsistent meals or meal timing 	<p>Some of our natural circadian rhythms cause us to feel drowsy, and we may experience low blood sugar around 3pm in the afternoon. Knowing this, try to work around your fatigue schedule. Some ideas you can try...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expose yourself to sunlight (ie a walk or a cup of tea on the balcony) ● Do some gentle exercise/movement ● Find something that helps you feel energized in that moment ● Avoid sugary/refined carb foods that you may crave when you are tired ● Fuel with fat, slow carbs, and protein to avoid low blood sugar swings

Situation	What's Going On?	Try This...
Moved to P2 and weight loss stalled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your body still needs P1 ratios • Your body responds better to P1 foods • You've added in trigger foods that lead you to overeat 	<p>If you have moved to Phase 2 (P2) and your weight loss has stalled, perhaps it's time to experiment with Phase 1 (P1) again.</p> <p>Try experimenting with P1 ratios and P2 foods, OR P2 ratios with P1 foods, OR revert to P1 completely.</p> <p>If you go back to P1 and weight loss continues, it may be a sign that P1 works well for your body. Plan to continue P1 for 2-4 weeks, then try incorporating P2 again to see how your body responds.</p>
Hungry 2-3 hrs after meals, no matter what I eat during the meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your body's metabolism and blood sugar may be still adjusting to regular meals at regular times • Your body may still be adjusting to using fat as fuel • This happens most often to people who have a history of calorie restricted diets 	<p>If you feel hungry regardless of what you eat, maybe it is best for your body to have more frequent and consistent meals.</p> <p>Try experimenting with various sizes of meals paired with healthy snacks in between. You may find 3 meals with healthy snacks allows you to feel less hungry and more satisfied through the day. Remember that experimenting with portion sizes is NOT about restricting - it is about finding out what your body actually needs.</p> <p>It is important that you ensure you are getting enough fat in your meals and that you are prioritizing a consistent eating schedule.</p> <p>Keep in mind your body needs time to trust when you will be getting food, so it will naturally use the fuel more efficiently.</p>

Situation	What's Going On?	Try This...
<p>After certain food or drink items, I feel like I need to eat more food or a craving for non-compliant foods increases.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>"I can't just eat or drink a small amount of..."</p> <p>(Note: these CAN include "compliant foods" such as nuts, nut butter, dark chocolate, alcohol, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Trigger Foods” - These are foods that your body may not respond well to OR foods that tend to get you “off track” OR cause you to overeat Some foods may result in a greater release of insulin into your body - potentially increasing cravings and hunger later in the day or for a few days following 	<p>Observe which foods may be leading to increased hunger and cravings.</p> <p>EITHER ensure you are pairing those items with adequate amounts of protein, vegetables, fiber, and fats...</p> <p>OR...</p> <p>Consider omitting them (or replacing them with other foods) for a few days to see if you feel any different.</p>
I often eat late at night and feel hungry in the morning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating late at night may cause higher blood sugar through the night - this may increase the chance of waking up feeling hungry (or waking in the middle of the night) You may not be eating enough satisfying meals throughout the day 	<p>Most recommendations state to finish eating 3 hours before bed (though, the specific timing is highly individual).</p> <p>Try eating a bit more throughout the day and stopping earlier than normal. See how your body feels and if you notice any differences in morning hunger and/or sleep quality.</p>

Eating “perfect” ratios (within 5% of the 50/25/25 recommendations), but not losing weight

1. Remember everyone is different
 - a. The ratios are guidelines - 50% fat, 25% protein and 25% carbohydrates. Within the ratio guidelines, there is also a 5% “wiggle room”. This means 50% fat +/- 5%, 25% protein +/- 5% and 25% carbohydrates +/- 5%. You may find you feel best with higher protein (29-30%), and lower carbs (20-21% carbs). Or, you may find a different combination supports your body best. Reflect, track, and observe how you are feeling to find your “food fit”. (Click [HERE](#) to track your hunger, cravings, satiety, energy levels, and overall well being)
2. Stress
 - a. Increased stress can affect our body’s ability to lose weight. Try incorporating stress-relieving activities into your daily routine. Spend time identifying key stressors and strategizing ways to reduce stress in those moments.
3. Sleep
 - a. Similar to stress, sleep can negatively affect weight loss efforts. Most people require approximately 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Reflect on how you feel in the morning to discover how much sleep your body needs. Keep your bedtime routine consistent and your bed times/wake times the same throughout the week (including the weekend!)
4. Portion Size
 - a. Experiment with different portion sizes to see how you feel. If you’re always hungry (and reaching for snacks), try experimenting with slightly larger portions. If you’re never hungry (and not losing weight), try experimenting with slightly smaller portions. NOTE: if you feel hungrier or experience increased cravings or decreased energy - it is important to increase your serving size back to where it was to begin with. Start with SMALL changes and reflect on how you are feeling.
5. Activity
 - a. Diet is just one part of weight loss. It is also important to maintain (and/or build) lean muscle mass to support metabolism. This is especially important over age 45. General recommendations are to include 150 minutes of moderate cardiovascular activity and 2-3 strengthening sessions (approx. 30 minutes) per week. This can be achieved by 3 x 10 minute walks per day (after meals) and 2-3 sessions of strength exercises. Some people may need more vigorous cardio exercises and varying degrees of strength training. Remember that it is important to fuel your body so it can do the activities you want it to do.

NOTE: It is important that you are in contact with your primary care physician prior to and while experimenting with weight loss strategies to ensure you are doing so in a safe and effective manner for your individual needs.