

How to plan your deficit

Even though you've been given a daily calorie target, it doesn't always have to be adhered to, to get results.

It's much better to set yourself a WEEKLY or even MONTHLY deficit.

I know, I know, that sounds like crazy talk....haven't we all been told to eat 1200/2000 cal a day for fat loss?

But like all of these ridiculous methods it relies on us all being EXACTLY the same, having the same jobs, home circumstances, levels of stress, the same resources.

We all have times in our life where it's just not appropriate to be in a massive caloric deficit, and ultimately, even if you have a coach, the decision should lie with you.

Having a weekly or monthly deficit gives you much more flexibility, removes stress and guilt from feeling you have to hit a daily target, and means your fat loss journey can change and flex according to your circumstances.

And you know what that means?

Sustainability and consistency.....and they are MAGIC as far as fat loss is concerned.

This planner will guide you through how to set your own calorie deficit each week.



Your starting point

So before you think about what kind of deficit you want this week, you need to figure out where you were last week:

Day	Calories In (from MFP)	Calories Out (from FitBit/Apple etc)	Deficit or Surplus
Monday	1553	2109	-556
Tuesday	1345	2201	-856
Wednesday	1411	1964	-553
Thursday	1598	2301	-703
Friday	1901	1753	148
Saturday	1895	2763	-868
Sunday	1632	1994	-362
Total Weekly Deficit/Surplus			-3750

Once you know the size of your deficit, or in fact whether you were in one, you need to ask yourself a few questions:

- Am I happy with the rate of fat loss last week?
- How hard/easy was the deficit?
- How hungry was I?
- Did you do everything you'd planned to?

If you're happy with the rate of fat loss, level of hunger etc, then no need to change anything.

If you aren't then you could look at ways of increasing your deficit.

But what about barriers?

There may be some stuff coming up that means your deficit will be affected next week.

BE HONEST and REALISTIC here.

No point aiming for a 7000 deficit for the week if you've got a stressful week at work and a wedding to go to at the weekend.

Some examples of things that could stop you from achieving the deficit you want:

- A stressful week at work
- A child who is teething, meaning less sleep
- You're launching a new product/studying for exams etc which means more hours at your desk, being sedentary
- You're away from home for work without access to the same food
- You're on holiday
- You're on your period (ladies obvs)
- You're injured and can't walk/exercise
- You have a cough/cold - ALWAYS eat maintenance calories when you're ill.
- You're going through a stressful event such as relationship breakdown, a bad patch in your business, planning a wedding, moving house
- You're experiencing an episode of poor mental health
- You have a birthday, social occasion

Obviously, until these things happen to you, you can't know how they will affect your deficit.

What coping mechanisms will you turn to, how will that affect your ability to achieve a deficit?

That's why I always say to people, I HOPE these things happen during the coaching process, that way we can record, observe and adjust, and we have data on how to deal with it next time.

Apart from being a completely unrealistic situation, no one learned anything from having a perfect 12 weeks with zero distractions to focus solely on their health.

So until you have that bank of data built up, there will be trial and error involved.

Examples

Using the data above from the previous week:

Last weeks deficit	-3750
Above average work commitments	500
Sleep has been poor	700
At home all week so food normal	0
Was a little hungry & cranky last week	500
Enjoying steps so will increase	-800
	-2850

So here I made the following adjustments:

- An extra 100 calories per weekday for a slightly more stressful working week
- An extra 100 calories per day because my sleep has been poor
- No change to environment/travel/meals out
- Noticed I was hungry & irritable so an extra 100 cals per weekday for that
- I burn around 400 cals per hour walking, and I've been enjoying getting outside, so I'll do another 2 hours spread over the week

As you can see, this means my deficit will be smaller **BUT** it's still a deficit.

If I'd tried to 'push through' with no acknowledgement of my circumstances this week, I may not have been able to sustain it, and would've felt like shit for 'failing'.

Again, starting from the previous week's data point:

Last weeks deficit	-3750
3 days off work (more walks)	-1500
Recovery from gym good	0
Adjustment in week to allow for weekend	-1400
Would like to make more progress this week	-700
Family BBQ at the weekend	1000
	-6350

- I have 3 days off work so I'll generally be more active, not sitting at a desk, and may do some extra activity like swimming or paddle boarding
- I've recovered well from the previous week so don't need to rest more
- I have a social occasion at the weekend so I've decided to reduce my calorie intake by 200 per day so I can enjoy whatever I like at the BBQ
- Last week was a smaller deficit, and I feel like my motivation might take a hit if I don't progress a little more this week - adjustment of 100 cals per day, which I'll get from reducing calories
- I have a family BBQ and would like to eat more calories that day

So as you can see, two very different weeks calls for two very different approaches.

THIS is how you stay consistent and continue to make progress!

It's also totally OK to decide NOT to make progress one week, if you decide you need a break from a calorie deficit, physically or psychologically.

So that's it - now it's your turn!

Don't forget to drop your examples in the group for feedback, or email courses@food.ninja