SIMPLE WEIGHT LOSS STRATEGIES

Evidence-based tips for sustainable PCOS weight loss.

SIMPLE WEIGHT LOSS *Strategies*

If you've tried to lose weight before, you have probably heard that you just need to expend more energy than you are putting in. The truth is it's much more complicated than a simple equation of calories in, calories out. In PCOS, our hormones are out of whack. We often have too much insulin and testosterone and these hormones cause our bodies to hold on to weight and store fat more efficiently.

One of insulin's roles is to store excess energy as fat. In excess, insulin also stimulates your ovaries to make more testosterone. Too much testosterone causes further weight gain and triggers more insulin production. More fat storage means you become overweight. Testosterone is also produced in our fat tissue, so the extra weight then causes even higher levels of testosterone, further contributing to the problem.

You can see how easy it is to get stuck in this vicious cycle of hormone imbalance and stubborn weight gain. This is why when it comes to losing weight with PCOS, eating less and moving more aren't going to cut it. We need to address your insulin and testosterone levels before your body will be able to lose weight, no matter which diet you try or how hard you go at the gym.

If you've started reading the PCOS Repair Protocol book, you'll know that there are four 'root causes' of PCOS. The most common cause is Insulin Resistance. If you are currently overweight, research shows there's a 95% chance that Insulin Resistance is your primary root cause. This means that the number one most impactful thing you can do to support your body to easily lose weight is to follow the Insulin Resistance Core Treatment protocol in chapter 13.

SIMPLE WEIGHT LOSS *Strategies*

The main strategies I cover in the book are cutting out all forms of added sugar for four weeks, eating a high protein and low carbohydrate breakfast within an hour of waking, and following the balanced plate principles for lunch, dinner and snacks. I've also included information on the importance of sleep and the right type of exercise for improving insulin sensitivity. Check out the PCOS Repair Protocol for more detail.

By improving your insulin sensitivity, you will find that weight loss becomes much easier. Storing extra body weight is a survival tool - it's a safeguard against possible famine or other danger that could be coming around the corner. When your body is insulin resistant, it is in a place of danger where it is struggling to keep your blood sugar stable, dealing with high levels of androgens and increased inflammation. By improving insulin we can move your body from a place of danger to one of safety. This is often the missing link preventing you from losing weight.

Along with working on your insulin, here are a few extra tips to consider when it comes to weight loss:

Step 1

PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Sleep is so important for all PCOS Cysters. Lack of sleep reduces our cells' sensitivity to insulin and makes it harder for us to control our blood sugar. Insulin resistance directly contributes to weight gain, so prioritizing sleep is important!

Sleep deprivation makes us crave sugar and other refined carbohydrates for a quick energy boost. These simple forms of carbohydrates are easily broken down into energy so quickly raise our blood sugar levels, but they also raise our insulin, further contributing to insulin resistance.

Being tired makes it harder for us to make good decisions and exercise our willpower, so it's no wonder we find it harder to say "No" to chocolate and pastries after a restless night!

Check out chapter 19 of the PCOS Repair Protocol for my top tips for more restful nights.

Step 2

THROW OUT YOUR SCALES

Instead of using scales, I encourage you to notice how your clothes are fitting to monitor your weight loss progress. I know first hand how measuring your weight on a scale each day can be incredibly disheartening. It's completely normal to experience daily fluctuations in our weight based on where we are at in our cycle, if we've had a bowel movement and many other factors. This daily up and down can be so derailing when we are feeling good and looking to see progress reflected in the numbers.

Not only this, but body weight isn't a good indicator of our health or how much weight we have actually lost. Muscle tissue is more dense than fat, so weighs more on the scales. This means that as you start to lose body fat and gain muscle, you are unlikely to see a change in your weight. You will notice your body composition starts to change however, so you might like to consider taking some 'before' photos from your front, side and back. This will give you something to compare with as you begin making changes to your diet and lifestyle.

If you want to measure your progress, consider tracking your waist measurement instead of your total body weight. Waist circumference is a much better indicator of your health. Insulin resistance causes us to store fat around our midsection, so this is the area we often start to see changes in first as we get on top of our insulin.

If you would like to track your waist circumference, I suggest recording this once a month or every few weeks rather than daily. Remember, sustainable weight loss takes time.

Step 3

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU ARE DOING WELL

Instead of numbers on a scale or how you want to look in the mirror, bring your attention to what you are doing well right now. Maybe you ate a high protein breakfast, got a good night's sleep, feel more energized or tried a new exercise.

What can you congratulate yourself on this week? You are so much more than a number. Life is happening right here, right now. The more ways you can find to enjoy the present moment instead of waiting to reach your goal weight, the easier this whole journey will be.



Step 4

FIND YOUR CHEER SQUAD

Sticking to all of the changes we cover in the PCOS Repair Protocol is tough work! Finding other people you can connect with throughout this journey is key to keeping on track and staying motivated.

If you haven't already, join our free Facebook support group so that you can connect with the other Cysters on the same journey as you. If digital connections aren't your vibe, consider asking your partner, friend or a family member to join you in making positive lifestyle changes. Everything is much more fun with a buddy.



Extra considerations:

ARE YOU ON A LOW CALORIE DIET?

If you have tried cutting calories in an attempt to lose weight, your body is likely used to surviving on very little food. The research into very low energy diets shows that this way of eating can make you lose weight initially, but this tends to plateau around the 12 week mark. At this point, your body kicks into survival mode. It responds by dialing down your metabolism and making you very efficient at conserving energy.

Despite what your rational goals are for your weight, your brain has other ideas. It's primary goal is keeping you alive for as long as possible. This means if you keep reducing your calories, at a certain point it will dial back your metabolism so that you can keep going with less food. I've seen this scenario happen time and time again where Cysters are eating incredibly small amounts of food and still not experiencing any changes in their weight.

Another common scenario on low calorie diets is discovering that as soon as you increase your food intake even just a little bit, you gain weight really quickly (for example on vacation or over the holiday period). This is again due to your body being in survival mode. It has gone so long with so little food that as soon as your intake increases it thinks "Great! The famine has ended! I'll store this extra energy away for the next time we run out of food". This can make you feel incredibly restricted when even a few days "off" your regular diet can send you back to your higher weight range.

While it might feel counterintuitive, if you are currently on a low calorie diet and plateauing or not noticing changes in your weight, you might actually benefit from increasing your calories for a while to boost your metabolism. The best way to do this is to slowly increase how much you are eating over a few weeks so that your body has time to adjust and doesn't hold on to the extra food the same way it would if you suddenly increased your intake while on holidays.

Once you have found a sustainable amount of food to be eating daily and your metabolism has 'reset', you will find maintaining your weight much easier and less restrictive. This means you can enjoy a weekend away or an extra glass of wine here and there without noticing massive shifts in your weight. If you feel you need to lose weight at this point, you can reduce your calories slightly from this new baseline in order to slowly and sustainably loose weight, and then return back to your baseline once you reach your goal weight.