



**Disclaimer:** This presentation represents the personal advice and nuances that I pass on when coaching the basics of the Take Shape For Life program. It consists of my own personal annotations to the free guide that is provided to each client with their first order. I'm providing this to help my patients and clients understand the salient points of the program to help them succeed with their goals.

This is not a substitute for direct personal discussion between myself and my clients; rather, it should serve as a reminder of things that we've already discussed. Images from the Quick Start Guide are copyrighted/trademarked by Take Shape For Life/Medifast.



Take Shape For Life is not an extreme plan by any means. Still, our bodies are always doing their best to maintain a sense of balance (“homeostasis”). Starting this program might “upset the apple cart” for a good many people because our bodies have gotten so used to some bad nutritional habits. Most healthy individuals will tolerate these changes just fine. However, some individuals with chronic illnesses may be at risk for problems if changes occur too rapidly or unexpectedly. As such, it’s highly recommended that participants consult with their primary care physicians prior to beginning *any* program that is designed to affect one’s metabolism.

The following types of individuals should consult with their physicians:

1. Under the age of 18 years.
2. Over the age of 65 years.
3. Living with diabetes, heart disease, thyroid problems, or any other serious medical conditions.
4. Those taking medications, particularly those for control of diabetes.

As we discussed in my “How to Lose Weight” talk, one of the most effective mechanisms for losing weight is the achievement of a fat-burning state (called “ketosis”). Upon reducing the net carbs in one’s diet (<100 grams/day), the body will transition itself from utilizing sugar as its primary fuel to utilizing fat instead. For most, this process takes somewhere around 3 days and most tolerate this just fine.

It’s not unusual, however, for some to feel sluggish, tired, and lackluster. In my experience, it’s because their bodies are calling out for more sugar/calories based upon activity levels. It’s important, therefore, to consider backing down on your activities at the start to prevent low blood sugar reactions (“hypoglycemia”). Then, gradually increase activities as tolerated. For this reason, choose a starting date that correlates with slower activity days. If you still feel sluggish, grab a snack or an additional “meal” to boost your energy. It’s OK to do a 6+1 day or 2 (rather than a 5+1) if you need it. Don’t worry about this. When your body achieves fat-burning state, your appetite will lessen and you’ll fall right back down to 5+1. [“5+1” is discussed on next page.]

Also, it’s not unusual to experience cravings for the missing sugars and starches during the initial days. I recommend turning to a sugar-free snack such as sugar-free jello or ice pops, dill pickles, nuts. These will be discussed later on, as well. When selecting your start date, try to avoid days that fall on special events, particularly those that revolve around food. The less temptation around you, the better off you’ll be during this initial period.

Be aware that, unlike many of the extreme low carb diet plans, you do NOT have to check your urine for ketones on Take Shape For Life unless your physician or coach recommends it (if it appears that you’re not achieving ketosis). Most people achieve their fat-burning state quite easily within those first 3-4 days.



Strictly as an example, let's say that we are awake for 18 hours each day and want to eat every 3 hours, that would translate into 6 meals total for the day.

Furthermore, let's suppose we had the option of counting the carbs for each of our 6 meals every day of every month versus having only to concern ourselves with counting carbs for just one meal per day (and use pre-measured meal replacements for the other 5 meals). We know that people are way more likely to stick to the program that is the easiest to follow, hence the "5+1" program was born.

"5+1" simply refers to the daily consumption of **5 Medifast meal replacements** (all with similar nutritional value) **PLUS 1 "Lean and Green" meal** that individuals prepares for themselves.

Before I go on, let me note that unless you're very special, most people require more than 6 hours of sleep at night. So, doing the math: awake for 16 hours/day and consume 6 meals over that time period = **meals should be spaced apart by about 2 ½ hours each, more or less.**

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**Medifast meal replacements:** more than 70 different foods and flavors are offered that are all pretty much interchangeable. It doesn't matter which one you consume as they all have around 90 - 110 calories and are low glycemic index types i.e. they do not stimulate insulin as much as other food types. For example, the pancakes and oatmeal's have the same nutritional value as Mac 'n Cheese or the many soup selections, or the Brownies, bars or shakes. Nor does it matter which order they're consumed.

**Lean and Green:**

"Lean" refers to lean protein (meat, fish, tofu, etc);

"Green" refers to non-starchy vegetables. They do not necessarily have to be green.

The "Lean and Green" **may be eaten at any time of day. It can be your breakfast, lunch, dinner or in-between meal.** The timing of your Medifast meal replacements would revolve around when you consumed your "Lean and Green."



Good news: These **portion sizes are for COOKED weights**, not pre-cooked/raw. These are not bad portion sizes. For example, 7 oz is nearly ½ lb of shrimp or scallops. You’re going to want to purchase a small home cooking scale for measuring and learning appropriate portion sizes. It might take a little experimentation to figure out what cooks down to what. After that, it will become second nature to you.

Cook your meats anyway you want, but healthier means such as grilling, baking, broiling, poaching, etc are preferred. If you really like fried foods, it’s OK to do this once in a while (*After all, we ARE on this planet to live and enjoy ourselves!*). Just don’t make a habit of this.

It’s a good idea to include oily-types of fish at least a few times a week. Examples of such are tuna, salmon, mackerel, trout, and others. These are high in omega-3 fatty acids. Sashimi is a good choice [sushi not so much because it contains rice].

If you’re a vegetarian, go with meatless options such as tofu.

# Lean Meats

**LEANEST:** Choose a 7-oz portion (cooked weight) plus 2 Healthy Fat servings.

- Fish: cod, flounder, haddock, orange roughy, grouper, tilapia, mahi mahi, tuna (yellowfin steak or canned in water), wild catfish
- Shellfish: scallops, shrimp, lobster
- Game meat: deer, buffalo, elk
- Ground turkey or other meat: ≥ 98% lean
- Meatless options:
  - 14 egg whites
  - 2 cups of eggbeaters\*

**LEANER:** Choose a 6-oz portion (cooked weight) plus 1 Healthy Fat serving.

- Fish: seafood, trout, halibut
- Chicken: breast or white meat, without skin
- Ground turkey or other meat: 95 – 97% lean
- Turkey: light meat
- Meatless options:
  - 15 oz Mori-nu® extra-firm tofu (bean curd)
  - 2 whole eggs plus 4 egg whites

**LEAN:** Choose a 5-oz portion (cooked weight)—no Healthy Fat serving added.

- Fish: salmon, tuna (bluefin steak), farmed catfish, mackerel, herring
- Lean beef: steak, roast, ground
- Lamb
- Pork chop or pork tenderloin
- Ground turkey or other meat: 85 – 94% lean
- Chicken or turkey: dark meat
- Meatless options:
  - 15 oz Mori-nu® firm or soft tofu (bean curd)
  - 3 whole eggs (limit to once a week)

The meats here are divided into **3 groups** based upon their fat content ranging from **lean** to **leaner** to the **leanest**.

This distinction is very important because our bodies require fat to function properly, e.g. to build hormones such as estrogen and testosterone. In fact, some people who restrict their dietary fat intake too much can be prone to gallbladder problems. This is why it's recommended to add either 1 or 2 "healthy fat servings" to some of these, depending upon the group into which they fall.

As an example, let's say that a hunter friend has given you some venison to prepare. Venison belongs to the leanest group of meats and so you'd cook it down to a 7 oz portion size and be sure to add 2 healthy fat servings at some point during the day. On the other hand, regular plain ol' beef has plenty of fat so no need to add healthy fat servings to this.

# Healthy Fats

## Healthy Fat Servings

Add 0 - 2 Healthy Fat servings daily based on your Lean choices:

- 1 teaspoon of canola, flaxseed, walnut, or olive oil
- Up to 2 tablespoons of low-carbohydrate salad dressing
- 5 - 10 black or green olives
- 1 teaspoon of trans fat-free margarine

These are pretty straightforward.

Now, what's the worst thing that could happen if you accidentally go over the recommended serving sizes with either meat or oils? If you're progressing normally with your weight loss, in all likelihood, probably not much. I like to cook with a wok so I always use a little bit of oil regardless of what class of meat I prepare – even beef – and never noticed much of a difference. After all, it's really the carbs that matter with regards to insulin and fat deposition. On the other hand, if you've hit a plateau and are having a difficult time breaking through the barrier, it's time to get strict with all measurements.



You are **going to choose 3 servings of veggies for each of your lean and green meals**. And, unless otherwise specified, each serving is ½ cup of vegetables. You'll note that the veggies do not have to actually be green in color.

Take Shape For Life divides veggies into 3 groups based upon their carbohydrate concentration. Some are higher, others lower, some in the middle.

[NOTE: All vegetables promote healthful eating; however, during the weight-loss phase of your plan, we do eliminate the highest-carbohydrate vegetables (such as carrots, corn, peas, potatoes, onions, edamame, and brussels sprouts) in order to enhance your weight-loss results. Once you've reached your weight-loss goal, you are encouraged to include all vegetables for long-term health.]

Simply choose what type(s) of veggie you want to eat with your meal, then check the amount in a single serving; measure it/them out. Select all of the same (e.g. only spinach salad – that would be 3 cups total) or mix and match between groups (e.g. lettuce, tomatoes, white mushrooms would total 2 cups total: 1+ ½ + ½ ).



## Is fresh always best?



**MAYBE.** if you happen to be shopping in a local farmers market, find nice fresh/ripe veggies and are ready to prepare and cook them that on that very day, then certainly go for it.

Otherwise, consider this: many of the fruits/veggies that we find in our local supermarkets are grown far away. Whilst California grows a lot of things, so does Florida and foreign locales (Mexico, South America). Because of this fact, many of the fruits and veggies are picked weeks before they hit the market and are shipped to supermarkets around the country. If the color of the tomatoes, for example, is not quite right, they might be exposed to ethylene gas. We're browsing through our local markets and examine a particular fruit or veggie and determine that it will probably be perfectly ripe for consumption tomorrow and buy it. Unfortunately, something comes up and you can't get to the veggies and miss the peak of ripeness. **Bottom line: most of the time, we are not really consuming truly fresh fruit and veggies.**

To get around this: **Use frozen veggies** as these are flash frozen at the height of ripeness/peak of flavor. They will hold until you thaw and cook them, bringing a fresh taste to your food. This works for almost everything except for tomatoes (which, of course, are actually fruits) – there are no frozen tomatoes so buy **canned tomatoes** instead as these, too, are sealed when they are optimally ripe.

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Trivia: **Ever wonder what's the difference between fruits and veggies?** Fruits, technically, are the ovaries of a plant. They contain the seeds, whereas vegetables are the actual plant part. While most people are aware that strawberries, blue berries, apples, etc are fruits, so are tomatoes, pumpkins and cucumbers. However, most people refer to the latter as vegetables because they taste savory rather than sweet. A vegetable is a plant part such as a root, stem, flower, or leaf. Some examples of leaf vegetables are lettuce, spinach, and cabbage.



# Food should taste good.



## Optional Condiments

To flavor your meals and make your Medifast Program more enjoyable, you have the option of adding condiments to your food selections. Although condiments add flavor and zest to your meals, they can also contribute to your overall carbohydrate intake. Therefore, Medifast recommends reading food labels for carbohydrate information and controlling your condiment portions for optimal weight-loss results. Enjoy three servings a day.

Examples of a condiment serving include:

- ½ teaspoon most dried herbs and spices, catsup, BBQ sauce, or cocktail sauce
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon minced onion, yellow mustard, salsa, low-fat or fat-free milk/soy milk
- 2 teaspoons lemon/lime juice
- 1–2 tablespoons sugar-free flavored syrup (Medifast Sugar-Free Syrup, DaVinci®, Torani®, etc.)
- 1 packet artificial sweetener (Equal®, Splenda®, etc.)

To flavor your meals and make your food more enjoyable, you have the option of adding seasonings and condiments to your food selections. You can enjoy them 3 times a day.

Be aware that some condiments do have some carb calories in them (e.g. ketchup) so don't overdo things. Try to stick with the suggested amounts. This is good advice anyway because many people tend to overseason their food.

## Optional Snacks



[The picture above shows both optional snacks and some examples of healthy fats such as olives.]

I noted that it takes 3-4 days in order to completely enter a fat-burning state (ketosis). Once you've achieved this state, people often find that their appetites and cravings drop making it easier to follow the program. However, during those early days, it's OK to munch on some low carb snacks such as:

- 3 celery stalks
- 1 fruit-flavored sugar-free ice pop
- ½ cup serving of sugar-free Jello
- Up to 3 pieces of sugar-free gum or mints
- 2 dill pickles
- ½ oz of nuts: almonds (10 whole), walnuts (7 halves), or pistachios (20 kernels). Note that nuts are also a rich source of healthy fat and additional calories so use sparingly.

**Measuring tip:** when using your food scale, don't start with nothing and simply increase the scale by one nut at a time until you hit the ½ oz point; rather, add more than you think ½ oz is and remove nuts one by one until you hit the ½ oz point. You'll get to eat more food that way!

# Sample Menu

The graphic displays two sample meal plans, Day 1 and Day 2, set against a background of a yellow and green field. Each day's plan is presented in a light orange box with a white border. At the bottom left of the graphic is a small legend for meal types: Breakfast (orange), Lunch (green), Dinner (blue), Mid-Morning (light blue), Mid-Afternoon (purple), and Evening (red).

**DAY 1**

**Breakfast: 1<sup>st</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Original Style Eggs with egg whites

**Mid-Morning: 2<sup>nd</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Dutch Chocolate Shake

**Lunch: 3<sup>rd</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Cream of Tomato Soup sprinkled with parsley flakes

**Mid-Afternoon: 4<sup>th</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Caramel Crunch Bar

**Dinner: Lean & Green™ Meal**  
• 5 oz grilled salmon  
• 1½ cups cooked asparagus

**Evening: 5<sup>th</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast French Vanilla Shake

**DAY 2**

**Breakfast: 1<sup>st</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Spiced Pancakes

**Mid-Morning: 2<sup>nd</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Cappuccino  
*Recipe suggestion: Mix with 1 Tbsp zero-calorie, sugar-free French Vanilla syrup.*

**Lunch: Lean & Green™ Meal**  
• 6 oz grilled chicken breast  
• 2 cups romaine lettuce, ½ cup total diced tomatoes, cucumbers, and celery  
• 2 Tbsp low-carb salad dressing

**Mid-Afternoon: 3<sup>rd</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Cheese Pizza Bites

**Dinner: 4<sup>th</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Chicken Noodle Soup

**Evening: 5<sup>th</sup> Medifast Meal**  
• Medifast Chocolate Pudding

The beauty of the 5+1 philosophy is that there is no required order – one can mix things up at will – as long as you eat every 2 ½ hours. Lean and Green meals can be taken at breakfast, lunch, dinner, or in-between.

## Tips for Success



### **The first days:**

- Pick a good day to begin the program and avoid special events that focus on food.
  - Stay busy.
  - Remind yourself that you're on a journey to improve your health and you're ready to tackle it one day at a time.
  - Avoid the sights and smells of food if possible
- Don't hesitate to contact your health coach who can answer you questions and offer support.

## Tips for Success



### Going forward:

- Space your meals** carefully: eat every 2 ½ hours (approx)
- Don't skip meals**: otherwise, your metabolism will slow down.
- Eat slowly and mindfully**: try to spend at least 15 minutes eating. Take small bites of bars.
- Drink lots of fluids**: Try to consume at least 64 oz (8 cups) of fluid daily. Medifast foods have fiber added. Without adequate fluid intake, you can become constipated. You can drink anything that does not contain sugar such as sugar-free teas and sodas. Coffee is fine, as well.
- Limit caffeine**: You can consume coffee, tea, sodas, etc, but your body might become more sensitive to the effects of caffeine as you lose weight. Watch out for this.
- Avoid alcohol**: For several reasons; first, it can interfere with ketosis if the products contain carbs or are mixed with regular soda or juices; second, alcohol itself yields 7 calories per gram.
- Try not to cheat**: grabbing even a slice of bread or fruit can slow down your progress.
- Keep a journal**: track your success, your feelings, and observations. Share your experiences with others on the Support in Motion forums. People who journal tend to do better in the long run.

## What to expect

- Seeing Results
- If you hit a plateau
- What about exercise?

People often lose quickly the first few weeks, then slow down. The government places limits on what any weight-loss company can claim. However, when patients achieve ketosis (fat burning state) they average 2-5 lbs weight loss per week initially. I personally lost 5 lbs the first week, 20 lbs the first month, 30 lbs by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, 45 lbs by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month and 65 lbs by the end of the fourth.

If you hit a plateau, be sure to be strict with your measurements. Sometimes we get lazy and get loose with our measurements. Also, don't overexert or exercise too much during the weight loss part of the program as exercise stimulates hunger and cravings for sugar (it does NOT burn fat calories).

Light exercise such as walking at a reasonable pace is fine. For fitness, it's recommended that individuals walk 30 min 5x/week at a pace where one can talk, but not sing. Forget complicated heart rate formulas.





People who keep track of their progress seem to do better than those who do not.

The Quick Start guide includes this form that you can copy and use should you desire.

# Transitioning

SAMPLE TRANSITION CHART				
Week	Target # of calories	Meatless Meals	Lean & Green** Meals	Additions
1	850 – 1,050	5	1	1 cup (2 servings) of your favorite vegetables (any kind)
2	900 – 1,150	4	1	In addition to your - 1 cup of your favorite vegetables
				ADD - 2 medium-sized pieces of fruit OR 1 cup of cubed fruit or berries (2 servings)**
3	1,000 – 1,300	4	1	In addition to your - 1 cup of your favorite vegetables AND - 2 medium-sized pieces of fruit OR 1 cup of cubed fruit or berries**
				ADD - 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free dairy (1 serving)
4-6	1,100 – 1,550	3	1	In addition to your - 1 cup of your favorite vegetables AND - 2 medium-sized pieces of fruit OR 1 cup of cubed fruit or berries** AND - 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free dairy
				ADD - 4 to 6-oz serving of lean meat (one serving)** AND - 1 serving of whole grain (one serving)****

Upon reaching your goal weight, you'll transition gradually up to higher daily caloric intake. This will be necessary because at this time you will start to exercise regularly (exercise keeps hormones such as insulin and leptin stable) and your body will demand more calories. If you do not increase your calories, you'll feel like crap.

Whilst most plans (including Take Shape For Life) recommend including more fruit and vegetables during this process, as a physician, I caution about increasing the carb intake too much, especially if one does not exercise as much as they should. Increasing fruits (and their sugar load/insulin stimulation) without adequate exercise is pretty much a guarantee to put weight back on. Therefore, I recommend that you increase your caloric intake with low sugar/carb snacks and larger lean and green meals. We will discuss this in greater detail when the appropriate time comes.

Also, Dr. Andersen's book, Habits of Health (and its work book), is a good reference to living life in a more healthy manner. It covers nutrition, exercise, relaxation/stress reduction, and more. People who've used this additional tool have found it easier to maintain their newly learned healthy habits and maintain their weight loss over the years. The book can be found on the Take Shape for Life website or on Amazon.com.

# Congratulations!



Take Shape For Life is a very do-able way to lose weight and live healthier in the long run. It's based upon sound science and is designed to be easy to follow.

Don't get frustrated. After all, it took years to develop all of our bad eating habits in the first place. Our body has been trained over the years to pick up on various cues that set our eating behaviors in motion. Re-training our responses to these cues takes time, but is well worth the effort.

I dropped 65 # over 4 months and have never felt better in my life. I'm not alone. Others have done the same with this program. You can, too.

Contact me at any time if you have any further questions or concerns.

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