**Refeeds VS Cheat Meal**

Refeed: A calculated day of increased calories to or above maintenance levels that focuses on an acute elevation in carbohydrates

Cheat Meal: A meal, often not calculated, that supersedes your caloric intake, with less consideration to precisely hitting a specific macronutrient profile.

**Pros and Cons:**

**Refeeds:**

Pros:

* Calculated to ensure optimal performance and physiological benefits
* Easier to know how to manipulate if weigh loss stalls or elevates
* Allows for acute mental break from lower daily intake
* Excellent tool to utilize to elevate Leptin levels
* Multiple “fun” meals can be implemented in your day

Cons:

* Requires more precision and considerations than a cheat meal
* Limits the amount of fat a day one can have, eliminating certain dense foods you crave
* Less mentally satisfying than a cheat meal

**Cheat Meal:**

Pros:

* Less stressful in planning
* Allows for acute mental break from daily intake
* Allows you to fulfill more options of foods that you crave
* Increased fats may allow for positive hormonal benefits and longer satiation

Cons:

* Increased chance of binge and/or multiple cheat meals
* Increased inaccuracy in the ability to manipulate
* “Cheat Meal hangover” can cascade into further cheats

**Ideal Situations for Refeed over Cheat Meal:**

* Contest preps
* Photoshoot preps

**Ideal Situations for Cheat Meal over Refeed:**

* Vacation diets
* Wedding diets
* Lifestyle dieting
* Off-seasons

**How to Structure Refeeds most optimally:**

* Save highest carbohydrate meals for the meal immediately following your workout
  + Place second highest carbohydrate meal 1-3 hours prior to workout
* Train high rep with high intensity on refeed day
  + Can also incorporate on rest day to provide a longer satiated feeling and to allow for complete assimilation of carbohydrates to muscle glycogen
  + If you do train, train either the most caloric taxing body group (legs, back, full body) or train the most lagging muscle group.
* Be cautious of overall fat intake, as it is to remain the same or lower than a normal day

**How to Structure Cheat Meals most optimally:**

* Save cheat meal for the end of the day to avoid binge eating
* Try to workout later in the day to optimally prime the body for the heavy caloric load
* Try to keep all other meals low carbohydrate/fat and high in protein
  + Often times cheat meals are very high in fat and carbs, low in protein

**Important considerations to both Refeeds and Cheat Meals:**

You can expect to be heavier the following morning, largely in part to stored glycogen, increased sodium intake, increase water retention, and food sitting in your stomach. Both strategies are considered a “1 step back, 3 steps forward” approach where you will be heavier for a few days, but should reach a new low within 2-4 days.

Limit fruit intake on refeed days to 1-2 servings. Fruit is comprised of mainly fructose, which is stored in the liver and not muscle, therefore not providing benefit to energy and strength. Do not neglect fruit intake on regular days, just limit yourself on refeeds to reap the maximal benefits!

It’s important to resume to your daily caloric intake the following day and not under eat or continue to over eat. Self-control is crucial for this to be successful.

**Examples of Refeed:**

Meal 1: Egg whites with ½ cup oatmeal (high protein/moderate carb)

Meal 2: 5oz chicken with 2 cups rice and 1 cup green vegetables (high protein/high carb

Workout

Meal 3: 1 scoop whey with 3 serving’s cereal (high protein/high carb)

Meal 4: 5oz lean beef with 2 cups pasta and low fat pasta sauce (moderate fat/ high carb)

Meal 5: 1 cup greek yogurt, 1 medium banana, 1oz almonds, 1 scoop whey protein (finish macros)

**Example of Cheat Meal:**

Meal 1: Egg whites with ½ cup oatmeal (high protein/moderate carb)

Meal 2: 5oz chicken 3 cups green vegetables (high protein/low fat/low carb)

Meal 3: 1 scoop whey with 1 cup oatmeal (high protein/high carb)

Workout

Meal 4: Cheeseburger and fries Or Medium pizza

Meal 5: Protein shake