

Fat Loss Forever:

The Flexible Diet

BY KIM GOSS

FROM THE AUTHOR OF *THE RAPID FAT LOSS HANDBOOK*

A GUIDE TO FLEXIBLE DIETING

HOW BEING LESS STRICT WITH YOUR DIET CAN MAKE IT WORK BETTER



LYLE McDONALD

BODY RECOMPOSITION
www.bodyrecomposition.com

Q When is it OK to cheat?

A Never—unless you're playing the diet game.

Here's a shocker: Most diets will fail. The National Institutes of Health did a 20-year study that concluded that 95 percent of people who lost weight gained all of it back within a few years, and many gained back more. Other studies have reported similar results, and the problem doesn't seem to be getting any better. In fact, it may be worse.

Despite vast amounts of information available about nutrition in this country, over the past three decades the rates of overweight and obesity have steadily

increased. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 1980, 25 percent of American adults were overweight; in 1991, the number increased to 33 percent; and in 2001, 66 percent of adults in this country were considered overweight. The figures for children are even more troubling, as the percentage of young people who are overweight has more than tripled since 1980. More specifically, children ages 6-19 years in this country – 16 percent, over 9 million! – are considered overweight.

It's not that Americans don't want to lose weight; at least it doesn't appear that way when you consider we annually spend an estimated \$30 billion on weight loss methods. And it's certainly not for a lack of variety in diet methods. There are low-carb diets (*Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution*), low-fat diets (*The Pritikin Promise*), diets associated with medical institutions (*Mayo Clinic Diet*), and celebrity diets (*Suzanne Somers' Get Skinny on Fabulous Food*). So, what is the

problem?

It's not that diets fail to help people lose weight, but that people don't stick with them to continue losing weight or to maintain ideal weight. At least, that's the theory presented in Lyle McDonald's book *The Flexible Diet*. The issue, says McDonald, a respected authority in diet research, is not so much what diet to use or what type of exercise to perform, but the long-term adherence to those diet and activity changes. McDonald's prescription for lifetime weight control is simply "Eat less, exercise more, and repeat forever!"

From Crash to Fat Burn

Lyle McDonald of Taylorsville, Utah, was introduced to *BFS* readers in our July/August 2006 issue in an interview discussing how to crash diet safely. McDonald showed that short-term crash dieting could be a great way to jumpstart a diet because of the dramatic and motivating initial weight loss, but was careful to emphasize that his program

was not designed as a long-term approach to dieting. The solution to permanent weight loss, McDonald says, is to adopt a "flexible" approach to dieting.

Because there are so many variables associated with success in dieting, such as gender and genetics, McDonald says there is no "best" diet for weight loss. "About the best summary I've seen is that, if there is an optimal diet for the treatment of obesity, it should contain plenty of lean protein, lots of high-fiber vegetables and fruits, moderate amounts of refined starches and moderate amounts of fat." It's not difficult to find a diet that will help take off pounds fast, but for McDonald the real issue is with the maintenance of weight loss: Almost all diets fail because the dieters can't stick with the program.

People often set themselves up for failure from the very start of any diet they choose because they are striving for perfection, says McDonald. If they cheat on the diet, even if it's just one meal, these people often give up completely

Nutrition Guru Lyle McDonald



Shown here with her mother Sue, Jesse Butterfield was a competitive gymnast and weightlifter so always had to carefully monitor her diet. A junior (at age 18!) at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Jesse recently signed with the Wilhelmina Urban modeling agency

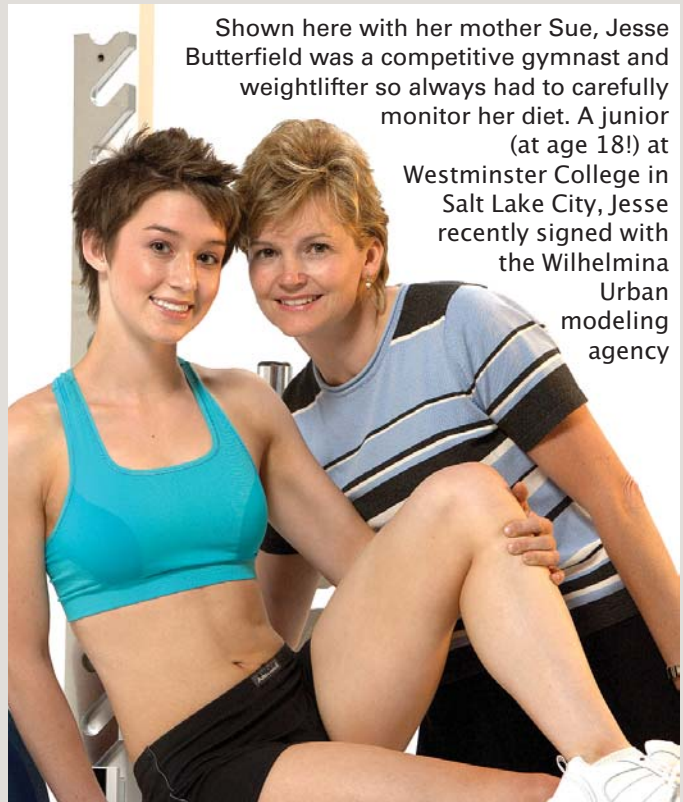


PHOTO CREDIT BLAIR KUNZ

because they believe that all their efforts have been wasted from that single lapse in discipline. In contrast, McDonald says, if you look at long-term results, occasional breaks from any diet program do not guarantee failure. So if you follow a strict diet for four days, then on the fifth day you decide to go for the super-size option at a fast food restaurant for lunch, it's not a big deal.

One peer-reviewed medical study McDonald uses to support his theory of flexible dieting was published three years ago in *Obesity Research*: "Prescribed 'Breaks' As a Means to Disrupt Weight Control Efforts." In this study, researchers wanted to determine the effects of going off a diet for brief periods. The subjects were put on a diet designed to help them lose weight and then were told to go off the diet for either two or six weeks before starting it again. The results were not what the researchers expected. "Not only did the subjects not regain very much weight; they had almost no trouble going right back onto their diet when the two (or six) weeks were over," says McDonald. "But consider what happened in this study: The subjects were told by the researchers to go off their diet; in essence, the break was part of the diet."

You Deserve a Break Today

McDonald cautions that instead of just cheating on a diet whenever you feel like it, the key to successful long-term "flexible dieting" is to plan the breaks so you stay in control. McDonald's approach is to have people experiment with planned breaks to help them lose the weight they want and keep it off. Let's look at one of these planned breaks, which McDonald calls "free meals."

A free meal, which he also refers to as a "reward meal," is a single meal that breaks your diet. Someone on a low-carbohydrate diet might have a serving of

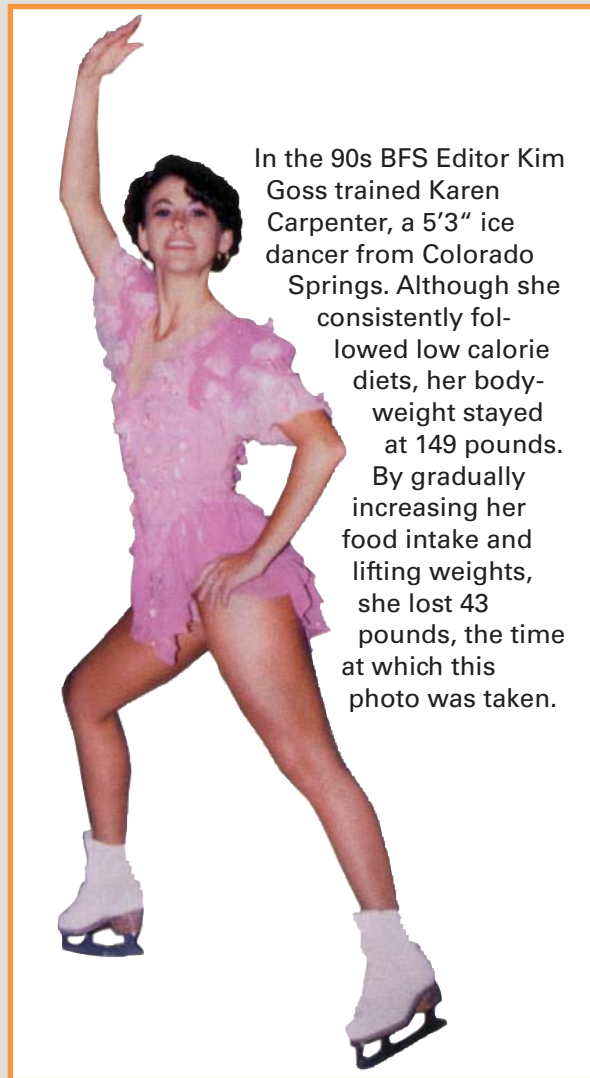
pasta, or someone on a low-fat diet might have a serving of French fries or pizza. "The main thing is that the free meal lets you address any cravings you might have by allowing you to have a little of those 'forbidden' foods."

McDonald believes that a single meal isn't really enough to affect the various hormones that are involved in the physiological responses to dieting. "Dieting nonstop for extended periods gets to be a real mental grind. Knowing that there is light at the end of the tunnel, that a couple of times per week you can eat more or less 'freely,' goes a long way in keeping your sanity. This tends to help with long-term adherence since you never suffer from the psychologically induced deprivation that you can't EVER have a certain food. You know that you're never more than a few days away from a free meal, which makes those days of dieting far more tolerable."

Recently, McDonald and I tried this approach with a sports reporter who was beginning a diet. We started with two weeks of a crash diet and then followed it with a flexible diet that included a few free meals a week. The reporter also lifted weights at least twice a week for 30 minutes per session, occasionally managing a third workout – enough work to develop some strength and muscle mass, but certainly not enough to burn a significant number of calories. The result was that he lost about 20 pounds of fat in 10 weeks and gained several pounds of mus-

cle and made dramatic improvements in blood pressure (144/100 to 121/84). He was never hungry, and he was satisfied to know he could achieve his goals without being obsessed with dieting or training.

The idea of using free meals is just one of McDonald's practical dieting strategies in *The Flexible Diet*. To purchase the book, or if you want to learn



In the 90s BFS Editor Kim Goss trained Karen Carpenter, a 5'3" ice dancer from Colorado Springs. Although she consistently followed low calorie diets, her body-weight stayed at 149 pounds. By gradually increasing her food intake and lifting weights, she lost 43 pounds, the time at which this photo was taken.

PHOTO BY JACK L. KNIGHT

more, go his website, lylemcdonald.com.

It's time for some fresh ideas to fight obesity; one look at the ever-expanding waistlines of Americans is more than enough proof that what we've been trying for the past several decades is not working. Flexible dieting is a sensible approach that tackles the issues that really matter. Check it out! **BFS**

WINNING NUTRITION

BFS is proud to endorse and provide the full line of Pharmanex® nutritional products. Pharmanex products are used by athletes at all levels, from grade school athletes to Olympians. In the interest of helping athletes achieve physical superiority and enjoy optimal health, BFS recommends you start with the following Pharmanex products:

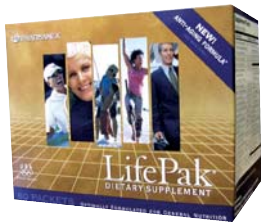


> G3® Superfruit Juice

- Derived from carefully selected "Super Fruits"
- Provides strong vascular and cellular protection
- High in antioxidants
- Delicious!

> G3® Superfruit Juice Pouches

- Same superior nutrition as G3 Superfruit Juice
- Convenient, spill-resistant pouches
- Each pouch provides two daily servings
- Delicious!



> LifePak®

- The world's most complete and effective nutritional product
- High in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants
- Convenient, pre-sorted packages

> XÔI Bar®

- Superior energy bar with G3 Superfruit Juice
- A food-based product with nuts, fruits and whole grains
- Low-glycemic carbohydrates to provide sustained energy
- High in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants
- Convenient, individually-wrapped bars for maximum freshness
- Delicious!



> LifePak® Women

- Scientifically formulated to fulfill the special needs of women
- Helps prevent osteoporosis
- High in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants
- Convenient, pre-sorted packages

> LifePak® Teen

- Specifically designed to fulfill the special needs of children 9 to 18
- Protects and nourishes growing bodies
- High in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants



> Marine Omega

- Provides essential omega-3 fatty acids
- Rich in EPA and DHA for optimal health
- Promotes normal heart and brain function, immune and joint health
- Promotes healthy skin and natural anti-inflammatory response
- Free of harmful toxins, contaminants and heavy metals

BIGGER FASTER STRONGER



1-800-628-9737

Fax (801) 975-1159
 biggerfasterstronger.com
 843 West 2400 South
 Salt Lake City, UT 84119
 info@bfsmail.com

To order these cutting edge nutritional products, and for advice on how to improve your dietary habits for optimal health and athletic performance, check out our website.