

Since April 2009, millions of people have successfully completed our Whole30 program with stunning, life-changing results. This is a summary of the official rules of the Whole30. For more detailed information, refer to our New York Times bestselling book, [The Whole30: The 30-Day Guide to Total Health and Food Freedom](#).

WHAT IS THE WHOLE30, FROM MELISSA HARTWIG

Certain food groups (like sugar, grains, dairy and legumes) could be having a negative impact on your health and fitness without you even realizing it. Are your energy levels inconsistent or non-existent? Do you have aches and pains that can't be explained by over-use or injury? Are you having a hard time losing weight no matter how hard you try? Do you have some sort of condition, like skin issues, digestive ailments, seasonal allergies, or chronic pain, that medication hasn't helped? These symptoms are often directly related to the foods you eat—even the “healthy” stuff. So how do you know if (and how) these foods are affecting you?

Strip them from your diet completely. Eliminate the most common craving-inducing, blood sugar disrupting, gut-damaging, inflammatory food groups for a full 30 days. Let your body heal and recover from whatever effects those foods may be causing. Push the reset button with your health, habits, and relationship with food, and the downstream physical and psychological effects of the food choices you've been making. Learn how the foods you've been eating are actually affecting your day-to-day life, long term health, body composition, and feelings around food. The most important reason to keep reading?

This will change your life.

I cannot possibly put enough emphasis on this simple fact—the next 30 days will change your life. It will change the way you think about food. It will change your tastes. It will change your habits and your cravings. It will restore a healthy emotional relationship with food, and with your body. It has the potential to change the way you eat for the rest of your life. I know this because I did it, and millions people have done it since, and it changed my life (and their lives) in a dramatic and permanent fashion.

THE WHOLE30 PROGRAM RULES

YES: EAT REAL FOOD

Eat moderate portions of meat, seafood, and eggs; lots of vegetables; some fruit; plenty of natural fats; and herbs, spices, and seasonings. Eat foods with very few ingredients, all pronounceable ingredients, or better yet, no ingredients listed at all because they're whole and unprocessed.

NO: AVOID FOR 30 DAYS

More important, here's what *not* to eat during the duration of your Whole30 program. Omitting all of these foods and beverages 100% for 30 days will help you eliminate cravings, restore a healthy metabolism, heal the digestive tract, reduce systemic inflammation, and discover how these foods are truly impacting how you look, how you feel, and your quality of life.

NO: AVOID FOR 30 DAYS

- **Do not consume added sugar, real or artificial.** No maple syrup, honey, agave nectar, coconut sugar, date syrup, stevia, Splenda, Equal, Nutrasweet, xylitol, etc. Read your labels, because companies sneak sugar into products in ways you might not recognize.
- **Do not consume alcohol, in any form, not even for cooking.** (And ideally, no tobacco products of any sort, either.)
- **Do not eat grains.** This includes (but is not limited to) wheat, rye, barley, oats, corn, rice, millet, bulgur, sorghum, sprouted grains, and all gluten-free pseudo-cereals like quinoa, amaranth, and buckwheat. This also includes all the ways we add wheat, corn, and rice into our foods in the form of bran, germ, starch, and so on. Again, read your labels.
- **Do not eat legumes.** This includes beans of all kinds (black, red, pinto, navy, white, kidney, lima, fava, etc.), peas, chickpeas, lentils, and peanuts. No peanut butter, either. This also includes all forms of soy – soy sauce, miso, tofu, tempeh, edamame, and all the ways we sneak soy into foods (like lecithin).
- **Do not eat dairy.** This includes cow, goat, or sheep’s milk products like milk, cream, cheese, kefir, yogurt, sour cream, ice cream, or frozen yogurt.
- **Do not consume carrageenan, MSG, or sulfites.** If these ingredients appear in any form on the label of your processed food or beverage, it’s out for the Whole30.
- **Do not consume baked goods, junk foods, or treats with “approved” ingredients.** Recreating or buying sweets, treats, and foods-with-no-brakes (even if the ingredients are technically compliant) is totally missing the point of the Whole30, and will compromise your life-changing results. These are the same foods that got you into health-trouble in the first place—and a pancake is still a pancake, even if it is made with coconut flour.

Some specific foods that fall under this rule include: pancakes, waffles, bread, tortillas, biscuits, muffins, cupcakes, cookies, brownies, pizza crust, alternative flour pasta, cereal, or ice cream. No commercially-prepared chips (potato, tortilla, plantain, etc.) or French fries either. However, this list is not limited strictly to these items—there may be other foods that you find are not psychologically healthy for *your* Whole30. Use your best judgment with those foods that aren’t on this list, but that you suspect are not helping you change your habits or break those cravings. Our mantra: *When in doubt, leave it out.* It’s only 30 days.

One last and final rule:

- **Do not step on the scale or take any body measurements for 30 days.** The Whole30 is about so much more than weight loss, and to focus only on body composition means you’ll overlook all of the other dramatic and lifelong benefits this plan has to offer. So, no weighing yourself, analyzing body fat, or taking comparative measurements *during* your Whole30. (We do encourage you to weigh yourself before and after, so you can see one of the more tangible results of your efforts when your program is over.)

THE FINE PRINT

These foods are exceptions to the rule, and are allowed during your Whole30.

- **Ghee or clarified butter.** These are the only source of dairy allowed during your Whole30. Plain old butter is NOT allowed, as the milk proteins found in non-clarified butter could impact the results of your program.
- **Fruit juice.** Some products or recipes will include fruit juice as a stand-alone ingredient or natural sweetener, which is fine for the purposes of the Whole30. (We have to draw the line somewhere.)
- **Certain legumes.** Green beans, sugar snap peas, and snow peas are allowed. While they're technically a legume, these are far more "pod" than "bean," and green plant matter is generally good for you.
- **Vinegar.** Nearly all forms of vinegar, including white, red wine, balsamic, apple cider, and rice, are allowed during your Whole30 program. (The only exception is malt vinegar, which generally contains gluten.)
- **Coconut aminos.** All brands of coconut aminos (a brewed and naturally fermented soy sauce substitute) are acceptable, even if you see the word "coconut nectar" in the ingredient list.
- **Salt.** Did you know that all iodized table salt contains sugar? Sugar (often in the form of dextrose) is chemically essential to keep the potassium iodide from oxidizing and being lost. Because all restaurants and pre-packaged foods contain salt, we're making salt an exception to our "no added sugar" rule.

GIVE US THIRTY DAYS

Your only job during the Whole30 is to focus on making good food choices. You don't need to weigh or measure, you don't need to count calories, you don't need to purchase everything organic, grass-fed, pastured, or local. Just figure out how to stick to the Whole30 rules in any setting, around every special circumstance, under any amount of stress... for 30 straight days. Your only job? Eat. Good. Food.

The only way this works is if you give it the full thirty days: no cheats, slips, or "special occasions." This isn't a hazing, a boot camp, or us playing the tough guy. This is a fact, born of science and experience. The Whole30 is, at its heart, an elimination diet. Just a small amount of any of these inflammatory foods could break the healing cycle; promoting cravings, messing with blood sugar, disrupting the integrity of your digestive tract, and (most important) firing up the immune system. One bite of pizza, one spoonful of ice cream, one lick of the spoon mixing the batter within the 30-day period and you've broken the "reset" button, requiring you to start over again on Day 1.

You must commit to the full program, exactly as written, 100% for the full 30 days. Anything less and you won't experience the full benefits the program has to offer. Anything less and you are selling yourself—and your life-changing results—short.

It's only 30 days.

IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

Here comes the tough love. This is for those of you who are considering taking on this life-changing month, but aren't sure you can actually pull it off, cheat free, for a full 30 days. This is for the people who have tried this before, but who "slipped" or "fell off the wagon" or "just HAD to eat (fill in food here) because of this (fill in event here)." This is for you.

- **This is not hard.** Don't you dare tell us this is hard. Fighting cancer is hard. Birthing a baby is hard. Losing a parent is hard. Drinking your coffee black. Is. Not. Hard. You've done harder things than this, and you have no excuse not to complete the program as written. It's only thirty days, and it's for the most important health cause on earth—the only physical body you will ever have in this lifetime.
- **Don't even consider the possibility of a "slip."** Unless you physically tripped and your face landed in a pizza, there is no "slip." You make a choice to eat something unhealthy. It is always a choice, so do not phrase it as if you had an accident. Commit to the program 100% for the full 30 days. Don't give yourself an excuse to fail before you've even begun.
- **You never, ever, ever have to eat anything you don't want to eat.** You're all big boys and girls. Toughen up. Learn to say no, or make your mom proud and say, "No, thank you." Learn to stick up for yourself. Just because it's your sister's birthday, or your best friend's wedding, or your company picnic does not mean you *have* to eat anything. It's always a choice, and we would hope that you stopped succumbing to peer pressure in 7th grade.
- **This does require effort.** Grocery shopping, meal planning, dining out, explaining the program to friends and family, and dealing with stress will all prove challenging at some point during your program. We've given you a huge number of tools, advice, and resources, but take responsibility for your own plan. Improved health, fitness, and quality of life doesn't happen automatically just because you're now taking a pass on bread.
- **You can do this.** You've come too far to back out now. You want to do this. You *need* to do this. And we know that you CAN do this. So stop thinking about it, and start doing. Right now, this very minute, tell someone that you are starting the Whole30.

IN CONCLUSION...

We want you to be a part of our community. We want you to take this seriously, and see amazing results in unexpected areas. We want you to look, feel, and live better than you have in years—or maybe ever. We want you to find lasting food freedom. Even if you don't believe this will actually change your life, if you're willing to give it 30 short days, DO IT. It is that important. We believe in it that much. It changed our lives, and we want it to change yours too.

Welcome to the Whole30.