



K&T 2024 4-Week Weight Loss Challenge



Welcome to the 2024 Weight loss challenge. If it is your resolution or goal to lose weight in this year, we would like to congratulate you on this decision as it is a first step in taking care of yourself and getting your health back in order, weight management is indeed the first step to health management. This document from www.katandtshepi.co.za is meant to help you start a weight loss journey in 2024, it contains the foundational information you need to launch your **best version** ever.

We are confident that the information on this page will help you reach your desired weight loss goal. It is worth remembering that sustainable weight loss takes time as it involves undoing the bad habits that led to weight gain and the creation of new habits that leads to weight loss, so be patient and kind to yourself, and do not let your motivation fade away as the year goes by. One last thing, tell people about your goal, share it, it is a beautiful and noble goal, those you tell will help you to be accountable. If you have any questions, suggestions or require clarity or support, please feel free to [Contact Us](#).

We wish you all the best on your journey, Lets begin!

Purpose of this document

To help you get started on your weight loss journey by equipping you with necessary tools, information, and knowledge over a period of 4 weeks.

Structure of this document

In the coming 4 weeks, we will provide you with tasks to complete for each week. These tasks will enable you to start your weight loss journey and to make progress in getting fit and healthy. The tasks can be located under each specific week's caption (e.g WEEK 1, WEEK 2 ,WEEK 3, WEEK 4).

"Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going." – Jim Ryun

WEEK 1 – SETTING UP

How do we gain weight? We generally gain weight when the energy we get from food exceeds the energy we use, the excess energy is stored as fat by our own bodies. How do we lose weight? We lose weight when the energy we get from food is less than the energy we use, the extra energy required is drawn from our fat cells. Therefore, to lose weight we need to eat less than we normally do and we need to do so for a sufficient period of time for change to be visible to the eye.

To eat less than we normally do, we need a system. A system that will enable us to consistently eat less to a point where our bodies start to retrieve energy from our fat cells. The actions for this week are meant to help you develop that system, this system is aimed at introducing small dietary and lifestyle changes. It is an incremental approach whereby you start with small, **manageable** changes but over time these becomes significant, this is to avoid being overwhelmed by taking on too much too early (one of our human weakness 😞) which can lead to failure .

To complete this week’s actions, follow the steps below (you can click the hyperlinks to visit our blog for more details on the step) :

1. Step 1 – Create your weight loss vision

Measure your current weight and record your targeted weight loss goal.

CURRENT WEIGHT (e.g 80kg)	DESIRED WEIGHT (e.g 70kg)
1.	1.

If you do not have a scale available now, you can leave the “current weight” field empty and populate it when you have a scale available. For more details on this step click [HERE](#).

2. Step 2 – Start cleaning your diet

Choose four food items you will reduce in the next 4 weeks, then choose 4 food items you will increase in the next 4 weeks as per tabular example below. This [list](#) can be helpful in identifying some of the healthy and not so healthy foods, but your choice of foods should be specific to you. For more details on this step click [HERE](#).

Foods to reduce/eliminate (e.g cookies, soda, chips)	Foods to include or increase (e.g apple, chicken, spinach)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

3. Step 3 – Choosing a physical activity

Decide which physical activities you will do in the next 4 weeks. For more details on this step click [here](#).

Physical activities (e.g walking,running)	Duration (15 mins per day)

4. Step 4 – Tracking your progress

At the end of each week of the 4-week challenge, measure your weight and record the food that you successfully reduced/eliminated, then add the food that you successfully increased/introduced, and record your physical activity accomplishments of the week at the end of each week and update your progress. For more details on this step click [here](#).

WEEK	WEIGHT	FOOD(reduced/eliminated)	FOOD (increased/introduced)	Completed physical activity
WK 1				
WK 2				
WK 3				
WK 4				

Repeat step 4 at the end of each week, this allows you to review your progress, to determine whether you accomplished what you committed to regarding food choices and physical activities, as well as determining your weight gain or loss for the week. Change can be difficult, and more so when building a new habit, therefore if you have failed on some of your commitments, recommit in the next week and give it another go.

Remember it took a while to gain some weight, it is only fair that it will take some time to undo, therefore patience and repetition is recommended.

All the best for this week.

WEEK 2 – WHOLE FOODS VS PROCESSED FOODS

Why do I still gain weight when I eat so little?

Hi there, welcome back to the second week of the 2024 weight loss challenge. We hope the first week's tasks went smoothly and you are excited about going further on your own weight loss journey. If you haven't started with the first week's action points, you still have a chance to do them now since they are all about planning and setting up for your weight loss journey. The first week's action points are for preparing to launch your **best version** ever, so give it a go as you have nothing to lose but stand to gain.

This week, we would like to answer the question raised at the beginning of this post, why do I still gain weight when I eat so little?. Many people experience the problem of gaining weight whilst they are consuming less food and maybe even whilst exercising more. This is not a great experience and it is so discouraging when you are on a weight loss journey. There are several reasons why this might be happening :

1. Your [metabolism has slowed down](#) and is making do with the little food you eat.
2. Although you have reduced your food consumption, you are still eating in surplus of your caloric requirements.
3. The type of food you eat are not supportive or conducive to weight loss (e.g they don't include sufficient vitamins and minerals that support metabolism or fat burning).

These reasons can be addressed and treated separately, but for this week's post we would like to address them with the same solution, ***Eating more of whole natural foods***. Eating more whole unprocessed foods as opposed to processed foods provides you with nutrients and energy that is conducive to your weight loss efforts, this fulfills your body's natural energy and nutrition requirements. The above mentioned 3 reasons for not losing weight whilst eating less can be addressed by the consumption of whole foods:

1. Whole foods boost metabolism due to their diverse nutritional profiles.
2. Whole foods are generally very low in calories in comparison to processed foods.
3. Whole foods are packed with quality micronutrients (Vitamins & Minerals) and have no additives and preservatives which are alien and challenging to the body.

Ensuring that your diet is consisting mainly of whole unprocessed foods is the easiest way to address many weight loss and health issues. Whole foods are foods that are in their natural state or as close to that state as possible (minimally processed foods), these include foods such as fruits and vegetables, beans and seeds, meats, and whole grain rice and breads. The easiest way to identify and verify whole foods (although this is overly generalizing) is to ask yourself "Does this come from a factory? NO is the answer you are looking for", "Does this look like natural food?". Another way to identify whole foods is to look at the ingredients list, most whole foods are single ingredient products or very few ingredients for minimally processed foods, a long list of ingredients should provide caution.

The problem with processed food is their incredible and shockingly high caloric content, even eating less of these foods is not so helpful because their calories far exceed their natural counterparts, so you still end up eating way more than you should. For example, the calories of 100g of potato is around 100, whilst the calories of 100g potato chips/crisps is around 500, not good. Another example is eating a fruit versus drinking fruit juice, a fruit contains whole natural nutrients and sugar, a person is normally content with eating 1 fruit at a time. Fruit juice on the other hand contains more than one fruit, additives and possible added sugars, and you are most likely to drink a bit more of it (e.g It take 3 apples to make 250ml apple juice).

This brings us to this week's task. The action point for this week is to identify and create your own awareness of processed foods(high calorie foods) on your diet:

1. For every meal you are eating, identify how many food items are whole natural foods and how many are processed foods. Are you happy with what you identified? Is there anything missing?

Doing this action daily will help you to be aware of the amount of food items that are high in calories but with little nutritional value on your plate, these are the foods that we eat and think that we don't eat a lot because they seem so small and negligible. On the other hand, this action will also help you to be aware of the amount of natural food that you consume, in most cases this amount is way less than it should and it highlights the high nutritional value you are missing out on when these foods are not included on your plate.

That's it for this week, it is about a simple habit for creating awareness of the type of food you mostly consume. Remember to continue with tracking your progress at the end of each week as prescribed in step 4 of [WEEK 1](#).

Until next week, we wish you all the best and stay blessed.

WEEK 3 – FORMING A BALANCED MEAL

A balanced meal, how much should I eat to lose weight?

Hello and welcome back. It is the third week of the 2024 weight loss challenge, we hope the information we have provided so far is helping you shape your weight loss journey and we hope that you are starting to realize the value of your efforts, *“there’s no reward without work, no victory without effort, no battle won without risk”-Nora Roberts*. Fitness and health is still within your grasp in 2024.

Today is the day that you track your third week’s progress as recommended in [step 4](#) of our weight loss challenge guide. By now you should be aware of some of the food that needs to go from your plate as well as food that needs to be included or increased. We hope you are winning with reducing the not-so-healthy foods whilst increasing the nutritious foods, we also hope that you have started to [move](#) a little bit more if you were previously sedentary and have increased your activity levels, we can’t emphasize enough the benefits of movement on your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing (*please do not rob yourself off this natural incentive* 😊).

This week we focus on forming a balanced meal. A balanced meal will ensure that you get varied and sufficient nutrients for optimal functioning of your body as well as helping with weight management. To us (Kat & Tshepi), forming a balanced meal is one of the good ways to address the question of how much one needs to eat to lose weight. Other ways to answer this question are: (1) Using our own intuition by simply being aware of our own bodies, knowing and stopping when we are full, or (2) by being a bit technical and using a *calorie calculator* to determine the amount of food to consume daily to reach your weight loss goal.

Although there are various ways to determine the correct amount of food to eat in order to lose weight, we focus and recommend starting with learning to create a balanced meal, this will build a solid foundation for proper nutrition and for creating your own healthy and enjoyable diet and menus. *Remember the best diet in the world is the one you create for yourself*, a diet that includes the foods that you choose and enjoy. This is the diet that will bring long lasting weight loss results.

To form a balanced meal we need to ensure that the basic components of our human diet are covered on our plates, these components are the three essential macronutrients which are Carbohydrates, Proteins and Fats , they are our bodies’ essential sources of energy. Alcohol is considered a fourth macronutrient due to its caloric content but it is not essential for survival and adds no value to weight loss efforts.

Carbohydrates includes foods such as fruits, leafy and starchy vegetables, rice, breads and pasta. Proteins includes foods such as meats and fish, eggs, beans and lentils, cheese, yoghurt, nuts and almonds. Fats includes foods such as dairy products, avocados, meats, egg yolks, olive oil and seeds. A particular distribution of these foods on your plate will form a balanced meal, here is a guide:

- Half (1/2) of a plate should be fruits and vegetables.
- Quarter (1/4) of a plate should be starchy carbs (Pap, rice, pasta, potatoes, bread, ,squash, peas, Couscous).
- Quarter(1/4) of a plate should be proteins(fish, chicken, turkey, pork, eggs, beans, lentils, cottage cheese).
- Fats will be included in most of the protein foods or you can add a tablespoon of olive oil or butter.

The following image provides further tips and guidance on forming a balanced plate.

HEALTHY EATING PLATE

HEALTHY OILS

Use healthy oils (like olive and canola oil) for cooking, on salad, and at the table. Limit butter. Avoid trans fat.

WATER

Drink water, tea, or coffee (with little or no sugar). Limit milk/dairy (1-2 servings/day) and juice (1 small glass/day). Avoid sugary drinks.

VEGETABLES

The more veggies – and the greater the variety – the better. Potatoes and French fries don't count.

WHOLE GRAINS

Eat a variety of whole grains (like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice). Limit refined grains (like white rice and white bread).

FRUITS

Eat plenty of fruits of all colors.

HEALTHY PROTEIN

Choose fish, poultry, beans, and nuts; limit red meat and cheese; avoid bacon, cold cuts, and other processed meats.

STAY ACTIVE!

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The distribution of the macronutrients on your plate will help you to consume sufficient nutrients and reach a level of satiety easily. In forming a balanced meal, you will be avoiding overeating certain macros than others which affects your energy levels, fat burning/storage and feeling full. A typical example would be overeating simple carbohydrates(white rice, crisps, biscuits, white breads, sodas) rarely makes you full, spikes your blood sugar levels, prompt the release of insulin which can promote fat storage. But eating a balanced combination of whole foods such as vegetables, brown rice, chicken or fish and an apple will get you full easily.

The task for last week(Wk2) was to create an awareness of whole foods vs processed foods on your plate, we hope it was a good exercise with beneficial findings . For this week, we would like you to attempt forming balanced meals of your own. Using the tips and guide on this post, create balanced meal plates for your lunch and dinner throughout the week. Your meal should includes mostly whole foods and less processed foods (we try to keep ours to less than 25%).

In attempting to keep our meals balanced, our ([Kat & Tshepi](#)) lunch and dinner typically consists of roasted vegetables (Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, green beans, baby marrows, pumpkin, patty pan squash), Beetroot , gem squash, spinach. Chicken breast/Pork chop and watermelon for a fruit. We have provided an example of our typical lunch below, we hope our attempt will inspire some freedom and creativity on your part to create healthy balanced meals of your liking and enjoyment.



Kat & Tshepi balanced meal



Kat & Tshepi balanced meal – Ingredients (Carbs & Fats)



Kat & Tshepi balanced meal – Ingredients (Protein)

We wish you all the best with this week's task. Until next week, stay blessed.

WEEK 4 – TRACKING CALORIES

MyFitnessPal, a digital tool that supported our weight loss journey.

Hi there, welcome to week 4 of the 2024 Weight loss challenge, this is the last week of equipping you with the necessary tools to succeed on your weight loss journey. It has been exactly 21 days since you started the 2024 weight loss challenge(hooray :)), it has been said that “It takes 21 days to build a habit, and 90 days to build a lifestyle”, we hope by now you have build a habit of intentionally taking charge of your health, this you would have done by completing the tasks recommended in the past three weeks

Habits are crucial in achieving your desired weight loss goal, each and every action you take either helps you achieve your goal or take away from your goal. The tasks you completed in the past three weeks added value to your journey and have reinforced your dedication to **your** fitness and health. With regards to building habits, James Clear states that every action you take is a vote for the type of person you want to be, so we hope the tasks completed so far have been votes for the healthy person you desire to be. This week, we would like talk about [myfitnesspal](#), a digital tool that has supported our weight loss journey since we discovered it 2021, but before we delve into it let us recap on the past three week’s tasks.

1. In the first week of the weight loss challenge, you set-up a system that will enable you to lose weight. You did this by deciding on your desired weight, you thought of and listed foods that you need to eliminate/reduce from your diet and foods that you need to introduce/increase. Then you committed to one or maybe few physical activities (antidote for stress 😊). Finally, you set-up a tracking table to use at the end of each week to measure, track and review your progress (we recommend doing this one on Sundays).

2. In week 2, you practiced the habit of being aware of the amount of processed foods vs whole foods on your diet. We imagine that you discovered there is more processed foods on your diet than you would like. WHO indicated that there has been a [high increase of processed food production and consumption](#) and in some countries over 60% of daily caloric intake comes from processed foods, that is staggering. In completing tasks for week 2 , we hope that you also discovered the need for more whole foods on your plate such as fruits and vegetables.

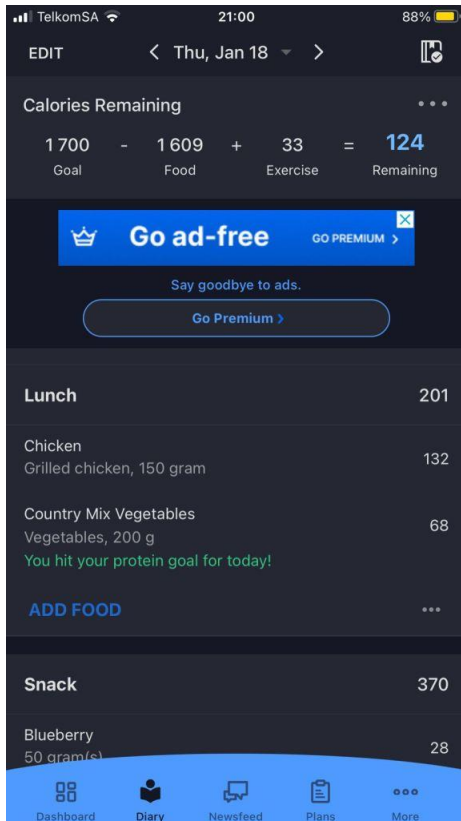
3. In week 3, you created your own balanced meals, these were the seeds to creating your own healthy diet (yes you can create your own nutritious diet now 😊). A balanced meal ensures that your meal contains sufficient macronutrients and micronutrients for nourishing your body and being healthy, it also ensures that you get consistent energy throughout the day.

In summary, you have created a system of creating a healthy lifestyle, you have cleaned your diet (and are constantly doing so each week), and you have started eating healthily and sufficiently. This week we would like to introduce you to [MyFitnessPal](#) , if you have not come across it as yet. MyFitnessPal is essentially a calorie counting App, it enables you to track the calories (amount of energy) you consume from your food choices and gives you a better idea of whether you are

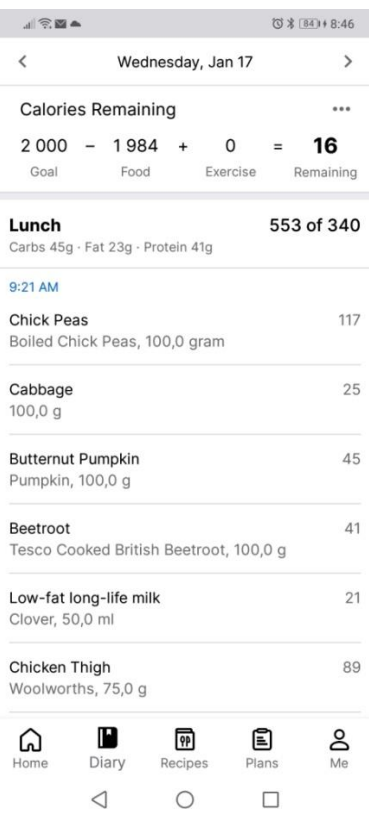
eating too much or too little for your weight loss goal. It counts your macronutrients (Carbs, Fats and Protein) when you record the food you are eating, it also gives you an idea of how much sugar, fibre and iron you have consumed and let you know whether you have surpassed your desired caloric limit or not.

We (Kat & Tshepi) have used MyFitnessPal since 2021, it has helped us to know more about the food we eat, our dietary patterns and staying on track on our weight loss journey. Counting calories is not an ideal way to manage your food and should not be a dependency, but it is worth knowing to reduce guesswork on the caloric value of your food. For us, it is not a dependency but we have found that when we count calories we are able to manage and control our food consumption better, so it is not ideal but works for us(we previously captured our own experience of tracking calories in these articles [WEEK 8 : Counting Calories](#) and [WEEK 9: 2nd Month Progress tracking](#)).

The last task for the 4-week weight loss challenge is to use MyFitnessPal to track your calories for a week. Simply download [MyFitnessPal](#) , setup your weight loss and calorie goals(the app will guide you :)), start logging your food. MyFitnessPal is free to use and it works perfectly on the free version, but you can upgrade to a premium version if you require more features. Have fun with this task, compare various foods, check out the calories of your favorite snacks, we guarantee you will be SHOCKED 😱. Below is an example of our food logging from MyFitnessPal.



Tshepi's MyFitnessPal food log



Kat's MyFitnessPal food log

Thank you for completing the K&T 4-week weight loss guide, we hope the information, tips and tools provided were helpful and will continue being useful on your weight loss journey. If you have not subscribe to our blog, you can do so at Katandtshepi.co.za, this will ensure that our weekly blog post will always reach you. We wish you all the best on your weight loss journey, always remember that CONSISTENCY IS KEY.

*“Believing you are capable of being healthy is not dependent on already being healthy.”
- Adam Bornstein*