

FAT LOSS

Facts, Tips & Tricks



by **Will Brink**

Table of Contents

Biography: Will Brink

Introduction

Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

The K.I.S.S. System for Success

Weight Loss Tips No One Uses

The Whey to Weight Loss

References

Fat Loss Revealed

Brink's Bodybuilding Revealed

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Biography: Will Brink

Will Brink is a columnist, contributing consultant, and writer for numerous health/fitness, medical, and bodybuilding publications. His articles on nutrition, supplements, weight loss, exercise and medicine can be found in magazines and journals such as *Lets Live*, *Muscle Media 2000*, *MuscleMag International*, *Life Extension*, *Muscle & Fitness*, *Inside Karate*, *Exercise for Men Only*, *Oxygen*, *The Townsend Letter For Doctors*, as well as many others.



Will Brink is the author of the book *Priming The Anabolic Environment: A practical and Scientific Guide to the Art and Science of Building Muscle*, as well as various chapters in sports nutrition–related textbooks and the e–books *Fat Loss Revealed* and *Brink's Bodybuilding Revealed*.

Will graduated from Harvard University with a concentration in the natural sciences, and is a consultant to supplement companies.

He has served as an NPC judge and as a Ms. Fitness USA judge. A well-known trainer, Will has helped many top level bodybuilders through all facets of pre–contest and off–season training. He has also worked with athletes ranging from professional golfers, fitness contestants, and police and military personnel.

His articles and interviews can be found on dozens of websites and at his own piece of cyberspace at www.brinkzone.com.

Will has co–authored several studies published in peer-reviewed, academic journals on sports nutrition and health.

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Biography: Will Brink

His monthly column on supplements, “The Intake Update,” is one of the most popular features in *MuscleMag International*.

Will has lectured at trade associations and universities around the United States and has appeared on numerous radio and television programs to examine issues of health and fitness.

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Check out *Fat Loss Revealed*:

Check out Brink’s *Bodybuilding Revealed*:

Introduction



This short e–book is broken up into four major sections that gradually take the reader from the largest perspective on nutrition down to the very specific. The first section takes two seemingly disparate viewpoints on nutrition and unifies them into a single theory people can use to make decisions regarding their approach to weight loss. This “unified theory” is the basis for my approach to nutrition, and should give people a solid understanding of the type of information they can expect from my e–books and articles.

Section Two is an overview of how people fail to achieve their fitness/health related goals by over–thinking and getting too wrapped up in the details. This is what I refer to as “paralysis by analysis.” People often take overly complicated approaches to their fitness/health/fat loss related goals, get confused, get frustrated, throw their hands up in disgust, and give up. The “K.I.S.S.” philosophy will help to clear the confusion, and allow you to move forward with your health and fitness goals.

The third section is a look at some simple—though rarely used and under appreciated—tips to assist your weight loss efforts. It’s intended to be humorous—with tongue firmly in cheek—but added to a decent diet and exercise plan, can be helpful. And we all know that any amount of help—however small—can be the line between success and failure when we’re trying to lose some fat.

The fourth and final section is a science–oriented look at the effects of whey protein on weight loss. Whey protein is almost ubiquitous in the diets of health conscious people, athletes of all



Introduction

kinds, and dieters. Whey has all manner of potential health benefits, from improving immunity, possibly preventing certain forms of cancer, to reducing the likelihood of overtraining in athletes — in addition to the fact it's an exceptionally high quality protein. But can it be used as a legitimate weight loss aid? Are there studies to support it for that use? The answer appears to be yes in both cases, and we explore the studies that exist in that section.



Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

When people hear the term “Unified Theory,” sometimes called the “Grand Unified Theory,” or even “Theory of Everything,” they probably think in terms of physics. Regardless of the topic, a unified theory often seeks to explain seemingly incompatible aspects of various theories. For example, a unified theory in physics attempts to create a single theory capable of defining the interrelationships among nuclear, electromagnetic, and gravitational forces. The result would be a single comprehensive set of equations, or as theoretical physicist Michio Kaku, puts it:



“...an equation an inch long that would allow us to read the mind of God.”

That’s how important unified theories can be. However, unified theories don’t have to deal with such heady topics as physics or the nature of the universe itself, but can be applied to far more mundane topics, in this case nutrition.

In this article, I attempt to unify seemingly incompatible or opposing views regarding nutrition, namely— what is probably the longest running debate in the nutritional sciences— calories vs. macronutrients.

One school, which I call the ‘old school’ of nutrition, maintains weight loss or weight gain is all about calories, and “a calorie is a calorie,” no matter the source (i.e., carbs, fats, or proteins). They base their position on various lines of evidence to come to that conclusion.



The other school, which I call the ‘new school’ of thought on the issue, states that gaining or losing weight is really about where the calories come from (i.e., carbs, fats, and proteins),

Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

and that dictates weight loss or weight gain. In other words, they feel the “calorie is a calorie” mantra of the old school is wrong. They too come to this conclusion using various lines of evidence.

This has been an ongoing debate between people in the field of nutrition, biology, physiology, and many other disciplines for decades. The result has been conflicting advice and a great deal of confusion for the general public, not to mention many medical professionals and other groups.

Before I go any further, there are two key points that are essential to understand about any unified theory:

- A good unified theory is simple, concise, and understandable even to lay people. However, underneath, or behind that theory, is often a great deal of information that can take up many volumes of books. So it would take a large book, if not several, for me to outline all the information I have used to come to these conclusions — which is far beyond the scope of this article.
- A unified theory is often proposed by some theorist before it can even be proven or fully supported by physical evidence. Over time, different lines of evidence, whether they be mathematical, physical, etc., support the theory and thus validate that theory as correct — or else continued lines of evidence show the theory needs to be revised, or is simply incorrect. I feel there is now more than enough evidence at this point for a unified theory of nutrition and future lines of evidence will continue (with some possible revisions) to solidify the theory as fact.



Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

A calorie is a calorie



In the old school of nutrition, which includes most mainstream nutritionists, a calorie is a calorie when it comes to gaining or losing weight. Weight loss or weight gain is strictly a matter of “calories in, calories out.” Translated, if you “burn” more calories than you take in, you will lose weight, regardless of the calorie source, and if you eat more calories than you burn off each day, you will gain weight.

This long held and accepted view of nutrition is based on the fact that protein and carbs contain approx 4 calories per gram and fat approximately 9 calories per gram and the source of those calories matters not. They base this on the many studies that find if one reduces calories by X number each day, weight loss is the result; whereas weight gain will occur if you add X number of calories above what you use each day.



However, the “calories in/calories out” mantra fails to take into account modern research that finds fats, carbs, and proteins have very different effects on the metabolism via countless pathways, such as their effects on hormones (e.g., insulin, leptin, glucagon, etc), effects on hunger and appetite, thermic effects (heat production), effects on uncoupling proteins (UCPs), and 1000 other effects that could be mentioned.



This school of thought ignores the ever-mounting volume of studies that have found diets with different macronutrient ratios with identical calorie intakes have different effects on body composition, cholesterol levels, oxida-

Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

tive stress, etc. Even worse, the “old school” fails to take into account the fact that different sources of a macronutrient can have different effects on metabolism.



Translated, not only is the mantra “a calorie is a calorie” proven to be false, but “all fats are created equal,” and “a protein is protein” are also incorrect. For example, we now know different fats (e.g. fish oils vs. saturated fats) have vastly different effects on metabolism and health in general; we now know different carbohydrates have their own effects (e.g. high GI vs. low GI), and that different proteins can also have unique effects.

The “calories don't matter” school of thought

This school of thought will typically tell you that if you eat large amounts of particular macronutrients in their magic ratios, calories don't matter. For example, followers of ketogenic-style diets that consist of high fat intakes and very low carbohydrate intakes (i.e., Atkins, etc.) often maintain calories don't matter in such a diet. Others maintain if you eat very high protein intakes with very low fat and carbohydrate intakes, calories don't matter.

Like the old school, this “new” school fails to take into account the effects such diets have on various pathways and ignore the simple realities of human physiology, not to mention the laws of thermodynamics!

In reality, although it's clear different macronutrients in different amounts and ratios have different effects on weight loss, fat loss, and other metabolic effects, calories do mat-



Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

ter. They always have and they always will. The data, and real world experience of millions of dieters, is quite clear on that reality.

The truth behind such diets is that they are often quite good at suppressing appetite and thus the person simply ends up eating fewer calories and losing weight. Also, the weight loss from such diets is often from water vs. fat, at least in the first few weeks. That's not to say people can't experience meaningful weight loss with some of these diets, but the effect comes from a reduction in calories vs. any magical effects often claimed by proponents of such diets.

Weight loss vs. fat loss!

This is where we get into the crux of the true debate and why the two schools of thought are not actually as far apart from one another as they appear to the untrained eye. What has become abundantly clear from the studies performed and real world evidence, is that to lose weight we need to use more calories than we take in (via reducing calorie intake and/or increasing exercise)...but we also know different diets have different effects on the metabolism, appetite, body composition, and other physiological variables...



Thus, this reality has led me to “Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition” which states:

“Total calories dictate how much weight a person gains or loses; macronutrient ratios dictate what a person gains or loses”

This seemingly simple statement allows people to understand the differences between the two schools of thought. For example, studies often find

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Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

that two groups of people on the same calorie intakes — but very different ratios of carbs, fats, and proteins — will lose different amounts of body fat and or lean body mass (i.e., muscle, bone, etc.).

Some studies find, for example, that people on higher protein/lower carb diets lose approximately the same amount of weight as another group on a higher carb/lower protein diet, but the group on the higher protein diet lost more actual fat and less lean body mass (muscle). Or, some studies using the same calorie intakes but different macronutrient ratios often find the higher protein dieters may lose less actual weight than higher carb/lower protein dieters, but the actual fat loss is higher in the higher protein/low carb diets. This effect has also been seen in some studies that compared high fat/low carb vs. high carb/low fat diets. The effect is usually amplified if exercise is involved, as one might expect.

Of course these effects are not found universally in all studies that examine the issue, but the bulk of the data is clear: diets containing different macronutrient ratios do have different effects on human physiology even when calorie intakes are identical.¹⁻¹¹

As the authors of one recent study that looked at the issue concluded:

“Diets with identical energy contents can have different effects on leptin concentrations, energy expenditure, voluntary food intake, and nitrogen balance, suggesting that the physiologic adaptations to energy restriction can be modified by dietary composition.”¹²

The point being, there are many studies confirming that the actual ratio of carbs, fats, and proteins in a given diet can affect what is actually lost (i.e., fat, muscle, bone, and water) and that total calories have the greatest effect



Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

on how much total weight is lost. Are you starting to see how my unified theory of nutrition combines the “calorie is a calorie” school with the “calories don't matter” school to help people make decisions about nutrition?

Knowing this, it becomes much easier for people to understand the seemingly conflicting diet and nutrition advice out there (of course this does not account for the downright unscientific and dangerous nutrition advice people are subjected to via bad books, TV, the 'net, and well-meaning friends, but that's another article altogether).

Keeping the Unified Theory of Nutrition in mind, the above information leads us to some important and potentially useful conclusions:

- An optimal diet designed to make a person lose fat and retain as much LBM as possible is not the same as a diet designed for simple weight loss.
- A nutrition program designed to create fat loss is not simply a reduced calorie version of a nutrition program designed to gain weight, and visa versa.
- Diets need to be designed with fat loss, NOT just weight loss, as the goal, but total calories can't be ignored.



This is why the diets I design for people — or write about — for gaining or losing weight are not simply higher or lower calorie versions of the same diet. In short: diet plans I design for gaining LBM start with total calories and build macronutrient ratios into the number of calories required. However, diets designed for fat loss (vs. weight loss!) start with the correct macronutrient ratios that depend on variables such as amount of LBM (lean body mass) the person

Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

carries vs. body fat percentage, activity levels, etc. Total calories are based on the proper macronutrient ratios to achieve fat loss with a minimum loss of LBM. The actual ratio of macronutrients can be quite different for both diets and even for individuals.

- Diets that give the same macronutrient ratio to all people (e.g., 40/30/30, or 70/30/10, etc.) regardless of total calories, goals, activity levels, etc., will always be less than optimal. Optimal macronutrient ratios can change with total calories and other variables.
- Perhaps most importantly, the unified theory explains why the focus on weight loss vs. fat loss by the vast majority of people, including most medical professionals and the media, will always fail in the long run to deliver the results people want.
- Finally, the Universal Theory makes it clear that the optimal diet for losing fat or gaining muscle, or whatever the goal, must account not only for total calories, but also macronutrient ratios that optimize metabolic effects and answer the questions: what effects will this diet have on appetite? What effects will this diet have on metabolic rate? What effects will this diet have on my lean body mass? What effects will this diet have on the hormones that may improve or impede my goals? What effects will this diet have on (fill in the blank)?



Simply asking, “how much weight will I lose?” is the wrong question which will lead to the wrong answer. To get the optimal effects from your next diet, whether looking to gain weight or lose it, you must ask the right questions to get meaningful answers.

Brink's Unified Theory of Nutrition

Asking the right questions will also help you avoid the pitfalls of unscientific, poorly thought out diets which make promises they can't keep and go against what we know about human physiology and the very laws of physics!

People that want to know my thoughts on the correct way to lose fat should read my e-book *Fat Loss Revealed*.



There are, of course, many additional questions that can be asked and points that can be raised as it applies to the above, but those are some of the key issues that come to mind. Bottom line here is, if the diet you are following to either gain or lose weight does not address those issues and or questions, then you can count on being among the millions of disappointed people who don't receive the optimal results they had hoped for and have made yet another nutrition "guru" laugh all the way to the bank at your expense.

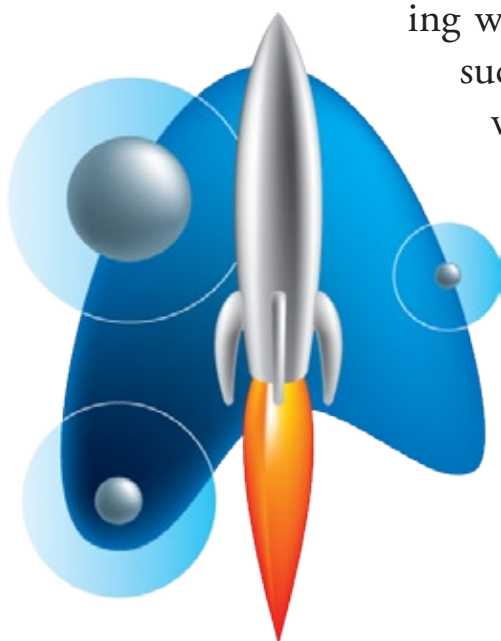
Any diet that claims calories don't matter, forget it. Any diet that tells you they have a magic ratio of foods, ignore it. Any diet that tells you any one food source is evil, it's a scam. Any diet that tells you it will work for all people all the time no matter the circumstances, throw it out or give it to someone you don't like!

Follow the K.I.S.S. Approach for Success

In this section of the report, we attempt to add simplicity to what many think of as a complicated topic. The acronym “Keep it simple stupid” or “KISS,” has been used for decades by the military, business schools, medical schools, and in countless other areas where unneeded complexity should be avoided at all costs. In the military, adding complexity where it’s unnecessary to complete a mission will get people killed. Adding complexity to a business venture where it is not required will often get you fired or see your company go down in flames. Adding complexity, or looking for complex answers to simple problems in medical settings can cause a loss of life or unneeded suffering. I am sure my readers have also experienced situations in which complexity added to situations that didn’t require it, led to disastrous results.



One area where most people fail to follow the KISS system is in their approach to fitness, nutrition, or supplements. In fact I find people seem to gravitate toward adding complexity to their approach when it comes to building muscle or losing fat. Not coincidentally, it’s the people who take the most complex approaches to their nutrition, supplements, and training



who are always the most confused and least successful. They focus on — and subsequently worry about — minutiae that prevent them from seeing the big picture and making the type of progress they desire. It often leads to what is referred to as “paralysis by analysis.” The vast majority of people would have better results, not to mention less stress, if they simplified their approach to losing fat or gaining muscle. It’s not rocket science, brain surgery, or even rocket surgery!

Yes, there are times when complex approaches need to be used to get advanced athletes,

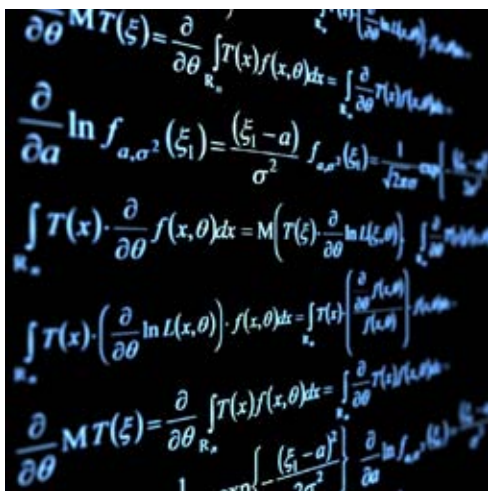
Follow the K.I.S.S. Approach for Success

such as pre-contest bodybuilders and Olympic track athletes, prepared for an event. These people make up, at most, 0.1% of the population. The rest of the world needs to worry less and act more.

Why is complexity a bad thing? The issue is variables.

Adding too many variables makes things more difficult, especially when trying to figure out why something is working or why it's not. Variables are an essential part of science. We don't need to go into great depth on this topic, so don't worry. I do, however, want people to appreciate how variables affect the outcome of their successes or failures in bodybuilding or fitness related endeavors.

So what is a variable? According to one of my textbooks:



“Scientists use an experiment to search for cause and effect relationships in nature. In other words, they design an experiment so that changes to one item cause something else to vary in a predictable way. These changing quantities are called variables...”

There are different types of variables (e.g., confounding, independent, dependent, controlled, etc.) but we are not going to worry about that right now. So how does this all apply to the KISS approach? The more complicated you make your approach to your goals of gaining muscle or losing fat, the more variables you have to control for. That is, for every new bit of complexity you add, you have to be able to account for it in terms of the results, or lack thereof, you experience.

Confused? Here's a simple example:

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