

**ARE YOUR
DIETING
STRATEGIES
“KILLING”
YOU?**



REVEALED:
THE DARK SIDE OF SUMMER DIETING
Julie Kerr

Are Your Dieting Strategies KILLING You?

REVEALED: The Dark Side of Summer Dieting And How to free yourself from the pressure to diet – for good

As the summer heat increases, so does the pressure to look good, feel great and achieve that beach perfect body.

And it seems as the temperatures soar, so do the numbers of people going on a diet...

- According to ABC news, around 108 million Americans will go on a diet this year. What's more, these dieters will typically make a staggering 4 or 5 attempts during a 12-month period.
- In addition, Experian Simmons Data Stream reports the percentage of dieting American women aged 25-54 dieting peaks in the summer months.

It seems the change in clothing and climate is a big motivator to cut back, cut out and lose those excess pounds.

And the media “*helpfully*” responds.

Take a look at any glossy magazine, newspaper or popular daytime TV show and they're all optimistically overflowing with the latest **fad diet** and promises to help you look good on the beach - fast.

And it all sounds so easy...

Just check out the following real headlines.

- *'DIET PANIC? Lose 5lbs in 5 Days'*
- *'FAT TO THIN FAST – How I lost my flabby tum in just 4 hours!'*
- *'Beach Ready Now' and 'Drop 4KG On Your Holiday and still have the mojitos!'*

And the list goes on...

But are these promises too good to be true? Is it really this easy to shift a few pounds and instantly feel sexier, more beautiful and more confident?

And are these promises something we need to strive for anyway?

It's time to hold the diet industry to account...

For sure these magazine headlines sell. So do the images of stunning airbrushed models and the latest celebrity gossip. These media lifestyles look so attractive and there's a subtle, underlying message that repeats – “*if you look like this, you can have this lifestyle too*”.

It means summer dieting is not just tempting, it's also becomes a normal lifestyle choice...

BUT could your summer diet actually do you more harm than good?

Is it possible that the tempting promises made by the mass media are actually misleading and manipulating you?

Could your dieting strategies be the cause of poor self-esteem, dissatisfaction and weight gain?

Well read on and you'll discover there's a more *sinister side* to the seasonal diet trend.

In fact, if you're about to embark on the latest fad diet read this report first.

I promise you'll uncover some valuable information that will leave you more informed and empowered about your summer diet choices. What's more, you could gain an insight or understanding that will help free you from the tyranny of dieting – for good.

Here's a quick overview of what you'll discover...

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Thanks for reading,

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Part 1: REVEALED: The Sinister Backdrop To Summer Dieting

In the past dieting was seen as a health solution for overweight individuals and a necessity for dancers, models and movie stars where appearance was paramount.

But this is no longer the case.

That's because there's been a **seismic shift** in the perception of dieting.

Dieting is now seen as a **normalised lifestyle choice** that's fashionable and applicable to just about everyone.

And there's a lot evidence to support this, for example:

- According to data published earlier this year, on average, [20% of people said they were on a diet](#) during any given week in 2012.
- Research shows almost 60% of adults would like to lose at least 60 pounds.
- *At least one in every two women who are NOT overweight has tried dieting.*

As a result, people across the Western World are embarking on elaborate, quick fix and potential dangerous restrictive eating patterns in an attempt to shift those "excess pounds" and feel better about themselves. It's the driving force behind strategies such as:

- Fad diets
- Cutting out / avoiding whole food groups i.e. fats
- Only eating certain foods
- Starving on certain days
- Missing meals etc.

But why are we dieting?

FACT: Our definition of beauty has narrowed and our obsession with celebrities, looking "the right way" and the size and shape of our bodies has intensified.

Look around you and you'll discover more and more people eagerly buying into the myth that "**thin is beautiful**". What's more, they believe if they achieve this look, somehow life will be better and they'll be happier.

This subtle, penetrating media message is pressurising women (and increasingly men) to take drastic measures to achieve the right look. And it means dieting is no longer reserved for the overweight or appearance conscious professions.

Instead, dieting comes with a seductive promise to help 'ordinary' people achieve a highly desired, celebrated look that promises to increase their value as human beings.

As a result, there are many people habitually dieting who have no need to diet at all.

Instead they've become one of an ever-growing number of people for whom dieting has become a way of life and a method to 'fix' *perceived* flaws.

It seems we're actually dieting because we've bought into the idea that "**we're not good enough as we are**".

And this idea is continuously reinforced into our subconscious by the following widespread cultural beliefs:

1. Thin equals beautiful
2. If you lost a few pounds life would be so much better
3. Dieting will make you feel good
4. That being a certain size brings happiness, acceptance, love
5. Being "fat" or "overweight" is unacceptable and unhealthy
6. Dieting is "cool", normalised and the thing to do at certain times of the year

And these beliefs are causing:

- A growing aversion and fear of being fat
- The lines between a normal healthy weight, being overweight and being obese to be blurred
- A desire to seek out and try the next big thing in the hope this will be the diet plan that finally works

As a result dieting is **BIG** business.

Back in 2010 The Guardian newspaper claimed the diet industry was worth £2bn in the UK alone. And in the US the number is even greater with estimates ranging from £20bn upwards.

And millions of people are being innocently sucked into the dieting trap. And as the statistics show, they don't just diet once. Instead they get caught up into a never-ending cycle of losing and gaining weight as they experiment with fad after fad after fad.

It's a shocking situation...

Damaging individuals – profiting big business

You see the problem with the mass of dieting advice and weight-loss solutions is they aren't created to benefit the individual.

If dieting was just about helping someone to control their weight so they remain a '*healthy*' size that would be fine. BUT it isn't.

Whether innocently or intentionally, advertisers and the mass media have created a *problem*.

The media is filled with images of airbrushed models with their flawless complexions; super skinny thighs devoid of cellulite and stick thin silhouettes with perfect breasts.

Yet despite these "role models" being a minority, these images are celebrated as beautiful and something everyone else should strive for.

As such, we're subtly brainwashed and manipulated into believing that if only your legs were a little thinner or your tummy a little trimmer, you'll be happier.

It means we're being consistently told, "If you don't look like this, *you're not good enough*". And so people are incentivised to diet to achieve the look they believe will 'fix' what's wrong with them – and in turn they'll become more beautiful, accepted, loved and happy.

These cleverly imposed attitudes and beliefs are proactively nurturing, stimulating and growing the billion pound diet industry.

And the answers we desire are cleverly packaged into a mass of widely available but ever changing commercial solutions.

It means you should not underestimate the role the media (deliberately) and society (innocently), has played in encouraging people to want to look a certain way.

You see advertisers spend millions on strategies that make us feel there's something wrong with us. And wrapped up in the solutions are images and success stories that convince us this solution DOES WORK.

Discover the truth the weight-loss industry keeps hidden

But behind the excitement of the latest diet and the spattering of "proven" success stories is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction and frustration.

That's because there are millions of people who have invested time, money and energy in the latest diet only to get disappointed. And what's more worrying is these same people often end up feeling worse about themselves and their body than they did *before* they started the diet.

And there's a reason for this...

The hard truth is most diets FAIL – and it's not because you were weak-willed or lacked the motivation and staying power to achieve your weight-loss goal. The real reason is there's no silver bullet to achieve the perfect size and that celebrated look.

Instead those seductive false promises and optimistic outcomes conceal a dark, more sinister side to dieting.

- It's a side that can have a huge impact on your health and wellbeing
- It's a side that explains why fad diets are inherently unsuccessful
- It's a side that's been known about since 1917 and one the diet industry and weight loss gurus would rather keep secret

Ready to discover the truth?

Then move onto Part 2 and find out why dieting will take you to a dark side.

Part 2: Warning: Dieting *Will* Take You To A Dark Side

In Part 1 I claimed that most diets don't work – shocking right?

But should diets actually come with a health warning?

Perhaps...

You see as dieting has become normalised many people innocently embark on them without any knowledge or understanding of the potential risks and the darker side effects.

For example, you may be surprised to discover that scientific evidence exists which **PROVES** there are **biologically predictable, counterproductive results of dieting**.

That's because dieting causes the body's '*innate survival*' and '*starvation response*' to kick in. This is an instinctive, hard-wired physical and psychological mechanism that causes the body's metabolism to slow down. In addition, restrictive eating leads to an array of physical, psychological, emotional and behavioural negative side effects.

But what's really thought provoking is these effects were understood over nine decades ago as a result of some very interesting wartime studies that revealed the effects of restrictive eating.

Let's start by exploring these studies in detail...

Wartime experiments with modern day implications

Food shortages and mass starvation were rife at the end of the two World Wars in Europe.

This led to a series of scientific experiments designed to determine the effect on healthy people of a restricted diet – **and the results are *something I believe every dieter should be made aware of***.

In both experiments all the participants were mentally, physically and emotionally healthy. What's more, they had none of today's pressure to look a certain way.

Study 1: Human Vitality and Efficiency Under A Prolonged Restricted Diet - 1918

This first study carried out by the University of Massachusetts in the winter of 1917-1918 aimed to discover how low metabolic rate could go before intellectual and physical activities became impaired.

26 healthy young men were put on a restrictive diet to quickly lower their body weight by 10%. This weight was sustained for a few months during which time their physical and psychological functions were carefully monitored and documented.

Study 2: The Biology of Human Starvation - 1950

This year long study led by Ancel Keys (a physiologist at the University of Minnesota) documented the effects of a restricted diet on 36 male subjects, drawn from 100 men who had volunteered for the experiment as an alternative to military service.

- For a three-month control period, the men ate approximately 3200 calories a day.

- After this time they were put on a highly restricted diet to reduce their body weight by 25%.
- For the next six months this weight was maintained by reducing the calorific intake for each man by 50%. This meant they were consuming an average of 1560 calories per day – an amount that replicated the conditions faced by *starving* Europeans at the end of war.

These experiments *intentionally* created a situation whereby subjects lost weight by restricting food.

(Notice - this is the same premise that underlies modern day fad diets – i.e. reduce your calorific / food intake and you'll lose weight).

At the start of both studies it was widely expected that restricted eating would lead to a lowered metabolic rate.

BUT the men also experienced a series of other side effects that were NOT anticipated. Check them out below...

Observed physical effects:

1. **Impeded temperature regulation:** As the men's metabolic rate slowed, they complained of feeling cold.
2. **Sleep disturbances:** Despite feeling tired they struggled to get a goodnight's rest.
3. **Vision:** Aching eyes, seeing spots and unable to focus properly.
4. **Hearing:** Ringing in the ears.
5. **Heart Problems:** Shrinking heart muscle and volume caused some of the men to suffer irregular heartbeat and arrhythmia.
6. **Lowered Blood Pressure:** On rising they felt giddy and some had momentary blackouts.
7. **Digestive problems:** Bloating, stomach ache, diarrhoea and constipation were common.
8. **Impaired mental function:** Many had difficulty concentrating, found their judgement and comprehension suffered and became easily distracted from their studies.
9. **Sexual function:** They soon lost all interest in sex.
10. **Accelerated aging:** Their skin dried and their hair began thinning or fell out.
11. **Physical strength:** As their weight dropped the men lost their endurance for walking long distances, standing for long periods, carrying, lifting and climbing stairs. They generally felt lethargic. Their muscles wasted as their weight reduced and they frequently cramped or felt sore, tingled or prickled.

Observed behavioural effects:

1. **Loss of perspective:** Before long the men's obsession with food, hunger and weight loss eclipsed all other interests. They began obsessively hoarding and swapping recipes and even replaced pictures of their wives and girlfriends with pictures of food.
2. **Food cravings:** Men were reportedly found rooting around in dustbins for food.
3. **Altered eating habits:** Mealtimes would last as long as two hours to savour and prolong the experience of eating.
4. **Binge eating:** In the 1917 experiment, volunteers could eat freely at Sunday lunch once a fortnight. Despite being cautioned to eat moderately, all participants ate excessively and uncontrollably - often consuming in excess of 5000+ calories.
5. **Purging habits:** After bingeing, the men felt an overwhelming desire to counteract their indulgence. This usually resulted in excessive exercise or restrictive eating in the following days.

Observed emotional and psychological effects:

1. **Emotional shifts:** These psychologically strong men reported feeling moody and depressed, nervous and anxious, irritable, apathetic and socially withdrawn.
2. **Distorted body image:** Despite being thin, many of the men began complaining of feeling overweight.

N.B: The reasons for these emotional responses are now known. You see a restrictive diet can have a profound impact on the level of **hormones responsible for regulating mood** and combatting depressive thoughts and anxiety.

A study reported in "Tryptophan, Serotonin and Melatonin, Basic Aspects & Application" (1999) found that healthy women going on a 3-week *moderate weight loss diet of 1000 calories* experienced *lower plasma concentrations of "the 5-HT precursor, L-tryptophan (TP)"* (a chemical known to regulate mood) along with *"consequent increases in hunger and loss of satiety"*.

Problems with recovery...

Once the experiment finished it took around five months for the men to stabilise their weight and resume normal eating habits. This "return to normality" occurred when the body reached "set point" – an optimal weight for a person's size and level of activity.

But in the meantime, once food was no longer restricted, many of the volunteers ate more or less continuously. And interestingly, they still complained of feeling hungry after large meals. It means that most of the men initially experienced substantial weight gain. And this was often coupled with a higher percentage of body fat (up to 40%).

So how are these studies relevant for today's modern dieters?

If you've ever been on a diet perhaps you too can recall experiencing some of these side effects. Perhaps you felt physically different or emotionally more unbalanced. Maybe you

found yourself obsessing over food and continuously thinking about your next meal. Perhaps you binge ate and if your diet failed or you stopped dieting, maybe you gained weight.

Perhaps you felt these dietary results were your fault and that you simply didn't have the staying power and motivation to see the diet plan through.

But is that the truth?

Given the results of these scientific studies it seems there's something else going on. And I'll reveal what that is in Part 3...

Part 3: DIET FAILED? Blame Your Stone Age Brain

FACT. The objective of dieting is to lose weight by restricting food or calorie intake.

For sure there are different motivations for making this decision BUT the underlying objective is to lose weight and achieve a different, trimmer body shape in the hope it will make you feel better about yourself.

However, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that dieting does not lead to this ultimate goal. Instead, **people who diet tend to gain MORE weight in the long run.**

But why is this?

The obvious answer is dietary failure is your fault.

But the truth is it isn't. And to explain why, check out these **five reasons** that explain why dieting is inherently unsuccessful...

1. Dieting initiates an archaic survival mechanism to counter lack of food
2. The evidence suggests in the long-run, dieting causes you to GAIN weight
3. Dieting is damaging physically, mentally and emotionally
4. Dieting distorts your relationship with food causing you to eat more
5. Dieting leads to more dieting

Let's explore these reasons in more detail...

1. Humans instinctively react in a surprising way to restrictive eating patterns

Food is the fuel that provides the energy, proteins and other nutrients needed to grow and repair, to think and to breathe and to carry out all the other bodily functions that enable us to thrive.

Food is a necessity for life and your body is hard-wired to ensure you have enough to survive.

Dieting goes against this instinctive driver. That's because when you make the decision to go on a diet, you're effectively embarking on a **restrictive eating programme** that involves cutting calories, removing food types or both. Consciously this decision makes sense, but to your Stone Age brain – restrictive eating signals a famine...

If the body detects food is restricted, the archaic, reptilian brain automatically responds by initiating an instinctive **survival process** driven by the brain stem and the **cerebellum**.

This instinct responds to *perceived* famine and lack of nourishment by initiating strong cravings for food. As such you'll subconsciously develop an obsession to eat. It's the body's way of focusing the brain to survive and proactively seek out food in situations where it's scarce.

When you put dieting in this context (remember those early 20th century studies we discussed in Part 2) you can see why it can lead to a host of physical, emotional and behavioural consequences.

It means people on a restrictive diet, whether that's restricting calories or cutting out certain foods, are highly likely to crave food to the point of obsession. And what makes this response even worse for a dieter is the body will crave foods that are high in fat and carbohydrates because these foods provide energy.

In addition, the body responds to restricted food intake by slowing down the metabolic rate to conserve energy – which in turn makes it even more difficult to lose weight.

As you can see, these instinctive responses to restrictive eating mean diets are inherently designed to fail simply because they make the dieter more likely to want to eat.

2. A restrictive eating regime leads to detrimental side-effects

If you don't diet 'sensibly', you are in effect **under-eating**. In turn, your body is **denied** access to *sufficient energy, proteins, vitamins and minerals to function effectively* – and this lack of nutrition unsurprisingly results in side effects.

Here are **ten common symptoms** of under-eating that many dieters can experience.

1. Metabolism slows
2. Urges to binge
3. Obsessive thoughts about food, weight and body image
4. Feeling low, mood swings and even depression
5. Self critical
6. Distorted body image
7. Emotional and increasingly unable to cope with life's challenges
8. Distorted and irrational thinking
9. Nervousness and anxiety
10. Panic attacks

Imagine how difficult it becomes to stick to a diet if you are experiencing some or all of these side effects...

3. Dieting distorts your relationship with food

Diet plans dictate and influence how you perceive and categorise foods.

Probably the most obvious is when a diet labels food as "good" or "bad".

In reality there are no "good" and "bad" foods. That's because rather like fashion this is subject to change and reframing by dieting experts (think back to the fat-free diets widely promoted in the 80s as a way to lose weight. It's now well known that fat is critical to our survival and should not be cut out completely). By making certain foods out of bounds and sinful, they subconsciously become even more attractive.

And given your restrictive eating plan is making you hungry and food obsessed and craving sustenance, you will instinctively want to eat more food than you need – and even binge.

This feeling of being 'out of control' around food causes great anxiety. Instead of being seen as life fuel, food becomes something to fear.

And the resulting side effects and emotional impact can be very challenging to address.

What's more, the obsessive focus on food, counting calories and endless weighing can (and does) lead to eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia.

4. The evidence proves dieting causes you to GAIN weight

Evidence suggests the majority of dieters will experience weight gain as a result of dieting.

For example, back in 2007, [UCLA researchers](#) reported the findings of a study in American Psychologist. They found that whilst people did lose 5 to 10% of their weight whilst on a diet, more often than not, the weight returned. What's more shocking is they found:

- **Sustained weight loss was found only in a small minority of participants**
- The majority of people regained all their weight, plus more.

The study concluded that; *"diets do not lead to sustained weight loss or health benefits for the majority of people"*.

And these findings have been replicated over and over. For example, columnist [Arabella Weir](#) commented in the Guardian Newspaper:

"Dieting is just like marrying Elizabeth Taylor. Both endeavours are doomed to certain failure, yet everybody embarks on them thinking: "With me, it's going to be different. With me, it's going to work."

In short, diets don't work. In fact, diets can make you fatter.

There are two key reasons for this:

- For a start dieting causes your metabolism to slow which makes it harder to lose weight. So if your cravings cause you to eat more and binge, weight gain is inevitable.
- Secondly when you stop dieting, your body will store what it can as fat until it's assured the threat of *famine* is over. This often takes a couple of months (and in the meantime, the reason to diet persists).

5. Dieting leads to more dieting

Give yourself time; eat a healthy balanced diet, take sufficient exercise and your body will naturally return to its set point.

But because most people are unaware of the science behind restrictive eating, the gained weight becomes the signal to start yet another diet. BUT:

- Each successive "failure" leaves you that bit heavier
- Gained weight becomes harder to lose because of lowered metabolism
- Yo-Yo dieting and an obsession with the latest fad grows as we want results NOW

I hope you're beginning to see that misery, frustration and ever-changing goal posts underpin most dieting strategies...

And because diets are inbuilt with inherent failure – it means when they don't work IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

I want you to really hear that...

- You're **not** weak-willed
- It's **not** your circumstances
- It's **not** even your genes

Instead by signing up to that summer diet, you've adopted an eating plan that's destined to initiate a powerful, instinctive survival mechanism that aims to keep you alive by making you obsess and seek out food.

And I believe it's this lack of understanding that causes untold misery for millions of people who face a daily struggle with food and their weight.

Some simply give up. But for others dieting becomes a lifestyle choice that's driven by an on-going search for the Holy Grail and a desire to find the silver bullet for success and happiness.

And it's not just the physical repercussions of this lifestyle.

In addition, countless people find their self-esteem and confidence is gradually eroded following the failure of successive diets.

And in Part 4 we'll discover the true **emotional cost of dieting...**

Part 4: HARD TRUTH. Lose Weight And Be Happy? No Chance...

There's an inherent danger in trying to lose weight to find happiness - even for those who had some weight to lose in the first place.

It's true. Dieting can leave you feeling good in the short term because it's possible to celebrate the small successes and feel good about not eating "bad" foods for a set period of time. However, as we have seen, these results are rarely sustainable.

That's because dieting *never* fulfils the promise. In fact in most instances it has the opposite effect.

It has you...

- Focus your life around food
- Obsess over and pursue impossible ideals
- Stress over what you can and cannot eat
- Restrict your day-to-day activities because food is in control
- Define yourself and your mood by a number on the scales
- Make your daily achievements about what you have or haven't eaten
- Distorts your body image and body confidence
- Disrupt relationships, damage your health and destroy your self-esteem and self worth

It's hard-hitting stuff that we need to explore in more detail...

Dieting limits your everyday experiences

When you start to diet and focus on a weight-loss goal, this direction starts to control and dictate your life.

Your life goes on hold and you put off doing things until you've reached your ideal weight. You won't allow yourself to feel good until you fit into that bikini or that dress. And in turn how you look limits what you say you can and can't do.

What's more, your obsession with dieting, food and shape causes you to lose perspective on everything else that's important in your life. Dieting, counting calories and denying yourself "off-limit" foods becomes draining and tiring and your relationship with yourself and others suffers as your priorities shift.

And in the longer-term it can lead to opportunities being wasted, lost or unnoticed. It caps your true potential and stops you living the life that you deserve and desire.

Ironic when you consider a diet is supposed to make you feel better about yourself.

Dieting is a destructive lifestyle choice that makes you beat yourself up

And what do you do when the diet doesn't work and you resort to your previous eating patterns or console yourself by indulging in unhealthy foods?

Failure to lose weight can leave the dieter feeling like a failure. What's more, the dieter is led to believe it's their fault the diet didn't work. They were just too weak because they couldn't fight off the cravings and lacked the motivation or confidence to see it through. Instead they broke their diet and even started bingeing.

In comparison, the physical body sees the failure of the diet as a success because it got the fuel and sustenance it required.

But emotionally, you feel rubbish.

Self-confidence is eroded because dieting has placed happiness and fulfilment in the future. In addition, your self-esteem has become connected with how you look not who you are as a human being.

And that's when damaging self-loathing and harmful self-talk can become a dark problem.

Dieting leaves you with a distorted body image

Many people embark on a diet because they believe it will make them feel sexier, more confident and more beautiful.

However, in this report we've seen the opposite is true.

Instead of feeling good about yourself, you end up at war with food and even more dissatisfied with yourself and your body. In fact, even when people do lose weight, they often remain unsatisfied with their appearance. Instead of feeling slimmer, they actually feel fatter, they take more notice of their perceived flaws and when people compliment them, they often refuse to believe the feedback.

Interestingly, this fact was also observed during the wartime experiments we discussed in Part 2.

Despite losing a significant amount of weight, the male volunteers complained of being overweight and began to experience critical evaluations of their body shape and size.

And this distorted view of body image goes some way to explaining why some people continue to diet even though they are seriously underweight. In fact a distorted body image and self-critical evaluations of shape and weight could be considered a warning sign that the dieter is on the slippery slope to an eating disorder such as bulimia...

The link between dieting and bulimia

As we've seen an unsuccessful diet can be the start of a slippery slope.

That's because the reason to diet in the first place remains (only you now have more to lose) which in turn sets up the cycle to fall for the temptation of the next fad diet.

It means:

- ***Fads set the ball in motion for dieting as an on-going lifestyle choice***
- **The confusing cultural messages about what's healthy and what's beautiful can influence and negatively impact people**
- **The dark side of dieting leaves people obsessed with food, weight and their appearance – and ultimately unhappy and lacking self-esteem**

Can you see the dark side of dieting?

But it doesn't stop there – there's an even darker side.

That's because that distorted body image, low self-confidence and need to lose weight even when it's not necessary can lead to eating disorders.

And if your restrictive eating plan has led to binge eating, it's possible that purging and bulimia can start.

And this darker side of dieting is the subject of Part 5.

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