

The **WEIGHT LOSS** **TRAP**

A pink FitLadder scale is shown at an angle, with a red measuring tape coiled around it. The scale has a black frame and a white face with black and red markings. The measuring tape has black numbers on a red background.

You were never
told how it works

FITLADDER

A Note for You...

This e-book is written to put you on the path of sustainable weight loss and provide you clarity about why it is so common to fail when you have decided to bring out the change in you, so you are safe from falling into the pitfalls of weight loss. It outlines the established scientific knowledge about fitness brought together by qualified dietitians and a certified personal trainer.

It is not a personalized diet plan, medical prescription, or a substitute for individual care. The calorie ranges and BMR estimates are general guidelines meant to enhance your understanding, and not to be treated as exact numbers for your body, medical history or conditions. Everybody is different, and what applies broadly may need to be adjusted for you.

If you have an existing medical condition, are pregnant or breastfeeding, or are taking medication that affects your metabolism, appetite, or weight, please speak with a doctor or registered dietitian before making significant changes to your diet or activity levels.

This book is offered as an educational resource by [fitladder](#), for anyone who wants a clearer, more honest understanding of what weight loss actually involves.

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You Didn't Fail. Your Plan Did.



"From tomorrow, I will wake up early in the morning and start jogging 6 days a week. I will eat only healthy foods, no junk, no sweets." The alarm rings the next day and we hit the snooze button, half asleep. Being in the habit of following the all-or-nothing rule, we skip whatever changes we thought of doing and postpone them to the next day.

You want to catch up for the meeting, the day goes by, dinner is late again and you are back to where you started 24 hours earlier. "From tomorrow, I will wake up early in the morning and change my life".

If this is what happens to you, you have thought of yourself as a problem due to which you are not disciplined and consistent.

You never were the problem.

You didn't fail. Your plan did.

The majority of weight loss plans provide people with a set of rules that they expect people to follow religiously, thinking that the human body is a machine which needs the right instructions. It does not work that way. The plan is bound to fail when it does not account for how your body, your schedule, and your life actually work.



Every unsuccessful plan focuses on just one thing: either what you eat or how often you exercise, as if that alone were enough. Weight loss depends upon three things working in balance, not one carrying the load of all three. You already know two of them. The third one is less talked about, which silently works against any plan you've ever tried.

This book explains all three, and how they actually work together to strike the balance needed to achieve optimum results.



This ebook is written by a team of qualified dietitians and a certified personal trainer at fitladder. Our team has seen people work hard, follow every instruction they were given, and still find themselves stuck in this exact cycle.

We've also got them out of it, not through willpower, but through a plan that finally accounted for how their body works. That's what we do, and this book is here to help you understand it all. We hope you find this book genuinely helpful, not just another set of rules, and instead an explanation to what's been standing in your way.



The weight didn't come back because you let it. It came back because your body was following rules you were never told about.



Why the Weight Always Comes Back

You finally lose the weight and feel proud. You buy new clothes in small sizes. And then, gradually the weight starts increasing again.

Initially you think of it as only one plate of pav bhaji, only one session of skipped workout, and before you know it, it's been one week of not following the routine. But the number keeps climbing, along with a silent frustration within. You ask yourself what is the point of even trying, if it always ends up back here?

You are not thinking it out, and you are not the only one it happens to. It's not something unique to you. It's close to universal and it has very little to do with how hard you tried.



What happened during and after you were losing that weight?

When you cut too many calories like drinking detox cleansers, following 800 calorie diets, and skipping meals, your body does not know the difference between a diet and a famine. It senses too much decline in calorie intake as a threat to survival. And a body under stress does three things at once.

- Slowing down metabolism to conserve energy.
- Elevation of hunger hormones so you constantly think about food, especially calorie-dense food.
- Preservation of fat expecting a near future shortage of food.

Your body is not broken in any way, it is just working exactly as it is designed to. The bigger the calorie cut, the harder the body works to reverse it, which is the reason behind weight rebound, that too a little bit more than before since the body builds a reservoir of fat in case of any future threat.

A change in your body runs deeper than just feeling hungrier. The part of your brain that controls hunger and fullness called the hypothalamus becomes irritated by high-fat, low-nutrient eating that often follows a period of restriction. It makes it difficult for your brain to signal that you have eaten enough food. Your brain's ability to tell you when to stop is disrupted.

Crash dieting does another damage: muscle loss. When your body is starved of calories it does not only burn fat, it burns muscles as well, as muscles need high calorie intake and stimulation to be maintained, and your body is trying to conserve energy in any way possible. The importance of muscles in the body can be highlighted by the fact that muscle is what burns calories even when you are doing nothing at all: sitting, sleeping, or scrolling through your phone.

Less muscles mean your body now burns fewer calories every single day than it did before you started the diet. Indians in particular tend to lose muscle mass faster than most other ethnic groups during calorie restriction, which makes this effect even more prominent.

So when the weight comes back, it is not returning to the same body.

It's returning to a body with a slower metabolism, less muscle, and hormones influenced to hold onto fat, which is why crash diets do not just fail to work long term, they often leave you worse off than before you started.

A real, lasting weight loss plan is never the one with the most restrictions. Weight loss is about slowly rethinking the everyday habits that led to weight gain in the first place. A change should be gradual enough that your body never mistakes the change for a threat.



Think back: recall your last serious diet attempt. How many calories were you actually eating in a day? (Use our free meal planner [Dietmap](#) to know the calories corresponding to your food portions). If it was closer to 800-1,000 instead of 1,400-1,600, that's not a discipline problem you had. That plan was fighting your body right from the beginning.

This is only half of the story. The other half shows up the next morning and that's where the next chapter picks up.



Why You Can't Stop Eating



You finished your meal, felt full, and then still found yourself standing in front of the fridge half an hour later, looking for something to eat?

You had just eaten. You were not hungry. And yet you were scanning the shelves for something you could not name. If you doubt yourself during moments like this, you are not alone and you are not weak. This is quite common, and it's not a sign of weakness.

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Recall the threat response from the last chapter, the one triggered by reducing too much calories. It does not end with the meals. Even a single day of crash dieting raises ghrelin, your hunger hormone, and suppresses leptin, the one that signals fullness.

The effects don't go away by dinner. They continue into the next day, making you hungrier and less satisfied no matter what you eat.

The effect it has on your body is one thing. You are also living in an environment loaded with irresistible foods: foods high in sugar, fat, and salt. This is the exact combination found in most packaged snacks, but is not found in nature. They are produced in a specific way, to overrule the signals in your brain that would normally tell you to stop.



Brain scans of individuals eating these foods regularly show patterns strikingly similar to substance addiction. Therefore, when you find yourself reaching for something you don't even really want, it is not a sign of lacking willpower. It is a predictable response to food that is meant to be difficult to quit.

There is a difference between real hunger and cravings. Real hunger does not ask for anything specific. If you are truly hungry, an apple sounds just as good as a samosa. Cravings are specific, usually sweet, salty, or fried and they often show up with no physical hunger behind them at all.

These cravings tend to have very noticeable triggers: a festive season stretching from one celebration into the next, family pressure to take another serving you did not ask for, and late-night snacking that fills the gap after a stressful day that never seems to end. Willpower itself tends to be at its lowest after a long, stressful day, when you are tired and feeling low.

What is happening within you: a difficult emotion shows up, food offers a moment of real comfort, and the emotion is still there once the food is gone. Guilt follows and that guilt quietly sets up the next craving.



Notice this: the next time you reach for food without real hunger, pause for just a second and ask what you are actually feeling right now. You don't need to change anything. Simply noticing is enough to slowly loosen the grip this cycle has on you.

When you are done with understanding your cravings, one thing remains unclear: how much food your body really needs in the first place. We will deal with that in the next chapter.



How Much Should You Actually Eat?

You have counted calories on an app. You have followed an influencer's "What I Eat in A Day" video. Sometimes you are told to have 1,200 calories, sometimes 1,500 calories, and then to just "eat clean" and stop counting altogether. In all of this, you rarely found a straight answer.

It's not as hard as it seems. Just that you were handed conflicting numbers from every direction and left to guess which one applied to you. No wonder it feels confusing. You were not actually confused about the food. You were given one-size-fits-all advice and told to make sense out of it.



The foundation of weight loss is a calorie deficit, which nobody explains clearly. Every single approach to weight loss: intermittent fasting, keto, GM diet etc. works through this exact mechanism underneath. Consuming a little less energy than our body needs results in a calorie deficit. Whichever method fits your actual life is valid, as long as it gets you there.

The confusion is not about the logic. It's about not knowing your own numbers, what your body needs just to function, and what a safe sustainable gap below that actually looks like. Your body burns energy every day just to keep you alive through breathing, circulating blood, and keeping your organs running, even if you spent the entire day in bed. This is called your BMR (basal metabolic rate). For a sedentary Indian woman, that number is around 1,400 to 1,600 calories a day. For a sedentary man, it is closer to 1,600 to 1,900. If you add calories used in daily activities, you get your maintenance number. This is what you need to maintain your current weight. (You can use our tool [Dietmap](#) to know how many calories you need for weight maintenance or weight loss according to your age, gender, and activity levels.)

Fat loss happens in the range below that number: a deficit of 300 to 500 calories a day, which produces roughly 0.3 to 0.5kg of fat loss a week. It is the medically safe range and ensures stable fat loss which can be sustained in the long term. A standard home cooked thali consisting of dal, sabzi, roti, and rice typically contains 600 to 750 calories depending on how much ghee/oil goes into preparation. A deficit does not mean eating less food. It means understanding how much you are consuming now, and adjusting from there.

Your source of calories matters too. Whole, minimally processed foods, like dal instead of packaged snacks or whole fruits instead of juice, can help you feel fuller on fewer calories because your body responds to them differently than it does to highly processed foods, which are designed to leave you wanting more.

Eating slowly and chewing more matters as well. Your brain takes time to register that you are full, and chewing increases the amount of food entering your stomach, which helps your stomach send signals to your brain that you are full. Rushing through your meal means you have often eaten past that point, before your body even had a chance to tell you.



Try this: for one day, don't change what you eat, just notice roughly what a typical thali or meal on your plate adds up to. Compare it with your daily maintenance number. You are just building a rough sense of where you actually stand. From this point you can modify your portions accordingly for suitable goals.

A calorie deficit does not mean a plate of salad is your only meal. It means the food you already eat commonly at home, working a little differently in your favor and that is exactly where we go next.



Your Food Was Never the Problem



Every “healthy” plate you have seen online looks nothing like the one you are having on your dinner table. So you assumed the problem was your table.

Most plans make you choose. Eat like this or do not lose weight. Skip the roti, skip the ghee, skip the sweets made at home during festivals. You try that for a while too until the restriction breaks, most of the time all at once, and you end up eating more of exactly what you were avoiding. That is not a failure of discipline. It is what restriction does to anyone.

Your food was never the problem. Roti, dal, chawal, and sabzi, the meals you grew up eating were never working against you. What works against you is being told none of it is right for you.

Labeling a food as restricted does not make you eat less of it. It makes you want it more, and the restriction finally breaks, which is bound to happen. You are tempted to eat more of it than you normally would have if you were allowed to have it in the first place. A flexible plate where nothing is permanently banned removes that fear entirely. A relaxed relationship with food holds up far longer than a strict one.



Going off track for a single meal changes nothing. Not one plate of biryani at a wedding, not one extra roti at your relatives', not one cup of sweet chai after a meal. What regulates the outcome is the pattern across weeks and months, not any single meal along the way. If your diet plan works when everything goes perfectly, it was never a sustainable plan to start with.

A healthy meal does not need to taste boring. Dal does not need to be made in the kitchen of a hospital for you to lose weight. A sabzi cooked with less oil can still carry all the flavor of one made the usual way. Once you pay attention to what Indian cooking already does so well with lemon, chillies, ginger, whole spices and garlic, your path to lose weight will start to seem much simpler. These add almost nothing in calories and everything in taste. Chai, in a smaller cup with less sugar, still tastes like chai. Make thoughtful choices most of the time, so that the occasional indulgent meal fits naturally into the picture instead of feeling like an offense against the plan.



Try this: at your next meal, do not remove anything from your plate. Just notice one small adjustment you could make without feeling like you are giving up anything, a little less oil in curry, a slightly smaller portion of rice, or one spoon of sugar instead of two in your chai.

Everything you have learned about food will take you far on this journey. What comes next is how you move because that takes you further ahead to achieve weight loss.



Fitness Without the Membership

Day 1: Full motivation, new shoes, intense workout done.

Day 2: Barely able to get out of bed, every muscle is sore. Workout skipped.

Day 3: You promise yourself you will start again next week.

Next week never arrives.

You may think that this cycle often repeats due to lack of commitment at your end. But you are stuck in this cycle because you were handed an experience so painful and confusing that your brain has permanently filed exercise under things that hurt and do not work. That is not a weakness. That is a completely reasonable response to a genuinely bad first experience.

Something worth focusing on is that your body does not know whether it is in a commercial fitness center or your living room. It only registers movement, and recovery after that. The environment is irrelevant to what is actually happening inside your muscles.

When you sign up for a commercial fitness center, you are getting ready, stepping out of your home, doing your movements, and getting back home. On a good day, for doing a 45-minute session, 1.5 hours is what it takes. And for most people juggling a job, a commute, and a family, this does not persist for long, no matter how motivated they were on day one.



The single biggest predictor of whether you will actually exercise consistently is not motivation or discipline. It is the friction. The lower the barrier between deciding to move and actually moving, the more likely it happens, week after week.

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A simple way to check where you stand: Can you climb a flight of stairs without gasping? Bend and sit for more than a couple of minutes to clean the lower cabinet? Push furniture with ease? Play with kids for twenty minutes without needing a break? Get through a full workday without crashing by 4 pm? That's what fitness actually measures, not a number on the scale, but capacity, with energy left over for your actual life.

Think of muscle as your engine and fat as your fuel tank. A bigger engine burns more fuel, even sitting idle. Crash dieting and physical burnout shrinks that engine. Building it back up needs exercise which is fundamentally your muscles working against resistance. Gravity provides that resistance for free. Every time you climb a flight of stairs, your leg muscles push your entire body weight upward against gravity, which is exercise, no equipment required.

If you are just a beginner, lean yourself against a wall and push yourself away from it, which works your chest and shoulder muscles. Anchor a towel at the door handle, lean back with your feet forward and pull yourself towards the door, which works your back muscles. Providing resistance to muscles is this simple. (For performing full body structured workouts at home, you can visit - app.fitladder.in)

The engine only grows when it is asked to do a little more than it is used to (day-to-day movements). This is progressive overload, and it is how your body adapts and comes back stronger. Strength training just 3 to 4 times a week is enough to preserve and build muscle during fat loss. Three 20-minute sessions a week add up to just 0.6% of your total time. This means time is not the limiting factor. We don't prioritize exercise because nobody explained to us that fitness was worth prioritizing.

Working out at home tends to last because of familiarity. Your living room does not require you to walk in and figure out where you belong. The engine only grows when it is asked to do a little more than it is used. There is no unfamiliar equipment to decode, no room full of strangers to feel measured against, and no commute standing between the decision to move and actually moving.

Your brain does not have to overcome anything just to begin, the space is already yours, which means the barrier to showing up tomorrow, and the week after, and the month after that, stays low. Habits survive on exactly this kind of ease.

The workouts that last are not the ones that push you hardest on day one, they are the ones that ask the least of you to simply begin again.

Building muscles increases your daily calorie burn, which allows you to enjoy occasional treats without derailing progress provided your overall routine remains consistent.

Females need to be clear about the fact that due to low testosterone in their bodies as compared to males, they won't build bulging muscles and macho looks.

Females tend to have toned up muscles which help in further lowering body fat and enhancing their appearance.

Try this: take the stairs once instead of the lift, and notice that your muscles are doing exactly what a leg exercise machine makes you do.

You now have two of the three pieces in place. The one still missing is the one almost nobody talks about and it is next.



The Pillar Nobody Talks About

You wake up groggy, wanting to sleep another hour, but you get up anyway because work does not wait. The day started with dissatisfaction, and somewhere in the initial hours you find comfort in your first meal not because you are hungry, but because it is the only thing which is feeling good at that time. This pattern repeats throughout the rest of the day.

By the time the day concludes, sleep is the only thing being asked to adjust. Everything else like work, family, commute and several small obligations took their share first, and sleep is what is left behind lagging. Nobody chooses exhaustion on purpose. The day starts early by necessity and ends late by culture, and sleep gets squeezed from both ends.

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Sleep is the third pillar and often it is the one that gets ignored for working professionals. Not because it is not important, but because everything else in the day seems to demand attention first.

Nutrition and movement get talked about constantly. Sleep silently gets left out of the conversation almost completely.

You may ignore sleep but sleep deprivation does not ignore you. It surrounds you from multiple sides at once. It works simultaneously against your hunger, your metabolism, your recovery, and your mood. No matter how well you are doing nutritionally and working out, a sleep deficient body will work against your progress.



Same as during your crash diet, sleep deprivation also raises the ghrelin hormone which induces hunger and decreases the leptin hormone which tells you that you are full, affecting your appetite from both ways at once. Your body goes into a stress state, treating poor sleep the same way it treats a threat, it starts holding onto energy as fat rather than using it for daily activities. The body starts breaking down muscles for energy instead, which if you remember is the engine that burns calories even at rest. Shrink that engine through poor sleep and your resting calorie burn drops with it.

All of this pushes you into the trap of gaining fat and making you gain weight, which is the opposite of what you want.

Sleep deprivation influences the balance of bacteria in your gut in ways that increase your preference of calorie-dense food, making the upcoming day's food choices harder. Adequate sleep does the opposite on every front: it restores the gut balance, helps in striking the right balance between the hunger and satiety hormones, gets your body out of the stress state, and promotes breaking down of fat for energy. Everything is working in the same direction to help you lose the fat and lose weight subsequently.



Sleep is the time when release of growth hormone is at the peak, which is your body's primary repair hormone. This is why poor sleep rids you of this healing mechanism leading to prolonged state of stress within, which then causes weight gain. Research between a group of sleep deprived and well-slept individuals showed that the sleep deprived group lost less fat and more muscles compared to the other group, despite being on the same diet and same workout routine.

The only difference was sleep. It implies that even if you are eating well and training consistently but compromising on sleep, you may not achieve the desired results.

Caffeine intake disrupts melatonin, the hormone which signals your body that it is time to sleep. It means that afternoon coffee that feels harmless might be working against the timely sleep your body is demanding.



Try this: if you usually have coffee or chai after 5 pm, skip it just once and notice how differently you fall asleep. It is a small change, and one that your body will feel on the same day.

Nutrition, movement, and sleep. All the three pieces are finally learnt now. Let us put them together.



What Happens Next

Think of tomorrow morning. Not the version where everything has to go perfectly: waking up on time, intense workout, or eating clean at every meal. Just tomorrow as usual. You wake up a little earlier than you normally would, not because you forced it, but because you went to bed a little earlier the night before. You eat your usual homemade meal for lunch, just slightly mindful of the portion. You take the stairs instead of the lift. Just a version of the day which is a little more on your side than it used to be.

You did not fail before. The plan which hides the basics from you regarding the human body failed. But now you know what a plan that actually works with your body looks like.



Food was never the enemy. The goal was never to eat less of it. Instead, it was to understand where you stand as of today in terms of body requirements, and to let your own kitchen work in your favor.

This week, notice one meal where you make a minor, sustainable adjustment, without removing anything you love from your plate.

Movement does not require a membership, a trainer, or an hour which you can barely manage consistently. It requires resistance and your body already has access to that everywhere, be it in your living room, a hotel room, or a park. This week pick one small movement you can repeat at regular intervals.

Sleep is not the leftover after everything is done. It is the pillar that makes the other two possible in the first place. This week, gain just one hour of it daily by dimming the lights earlier, mobile screen off a little sooner, or something else practical and doable for you.

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There will be some days when none of this will go as planned. You will eat the whole plate of biryani. You will skip the workout. You will be up too late for some reasons outside of your control. That is not the plan failing again. One day was never the criteria to measure your success, but the pattern across weeks and months is.

If you ever want support combining these 3 pieces together, that's exactly what our team at fitladder does. (Feel free to connect with us at www.fitladder.in and we will be happy to help you out.)

This book is not about us, nor is it just a collection of generic advice. It is about you finally having a plan that was built for your body. What you do with it from here is entirely up to you.

