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The Dukan Diet: Aiming For Your True Weight Instead Of Your Ideal By Susan Scutti



Gisele Bündchen

Drama gets people's attention.

It forces them to sit up and take notice as is the case when someone is suddenly struck down by a heart attack. That's a truly awful spectacle. There's also profound tragedy in a diagnosis of cancer when some unsuspecting person is told she now has only a 50/50 chance to live. Arrow straight to my heart!

How much drama, though, is there in being overweight?

Weight-related health problems are responsible for more deaths than cancer and heart issues, argues Pierre Dukan, a French medical doctor with 40 years of experience in clinical nutrition. "We just don't hear about weight-related deaths because no one dies from an 'excess-weight attack' but rather from health problems caused by excess weight like diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and breast and prostate cancers," stated Dukan on his [website](#). So it is for this reason that he has created a diet to help people reverse the "current trends of excess weight and obesity" while encouraging one and all to seek their true, not ideal, weight.

How much is too much?

"True weight," according to the [Dukan Diet website](#), is both a realistic and healthy weight that takes into consideration "a multitude of elements, such as your family history, age, gender, how easily you put on weight, your height, your history of dieting, and so on." It is not the ideal skinny but a healthy slenderness that is easy to maintain. It is the husband, so to speak, and not the fantasy man offering endless bottles of champagne and gifts.

Dr. Oz said he was shocked when he first read about the Dukan Diet, according to [AzFamily.com](#). "I didn't think much of it," he is quoted as saying. But after researching the diet and discussing it with Dukan himself, he understood that it was, as many people state, similar to Atkins but with a few twists; he debates the merits as well as the safety of the diet [here](#). The main appeal and virtue of this diet, though, can be found not in what it is but what it isn't: difficult. "If you can make a diet easy to do, people will stay on it," Oz said,

Sign me up.

Easy?

As summarized on the [Dukan Diet website](#), which is quite generous in that it seems to spell out every necessary detail, the plan works in four distinct phases. The first is an "Attack" phase, which is all about jump-starting weight loss. During this initial warp speed phase, a person is instructed to eat 68 high-protein foods that produce immediate and noticeable weight loss.

Next comes the "Cruise" phase, which adds 32 vegetables so that a dieter now has 100 foods, both protein and vegetable, from which to build meals. By alternating only protein days with protein plus vegetables days, a person will attain their true weight. "The average length of this phase is based on a schedule of three days for each pound you want to lose," reads the website.

After cruising, a dieter wants to "Consolidate," in order to avoid regaining the lost weight. The Consolidation phase allows a person to gradually reintegrate, in limited quantities, the previously restricted foods and follows a timeline of five days for each pound lost during the preceding phase. Although a dieter must continue with one 'pure protein day' every Thursday, a dieter is also allowed up to two 'celebration' meals each week.

Finally, a dieter enters the life phase, which Dukan refers to as "Stabilization." Having redesigned your eating habits, the key is strictly following three 'non-negotiable' rules. To maintain true weight, a dieter must:

- Eat three tablespoons of oat bran each day
- Take a 20-minute walk each day and when possible, choose the stairs
- Follow the pure protein plan each Thursday

Significantly, the Dukan Diet makes no bold promises and instead offers a dieter the chance to reach a realistic weight that can be easily maintained if strict rules are followed, a plan of action which has, according to the *Daily Mail*, appealed to the likes of Jennifer Lopez, Penelope Cruz, Gisele Bundchen, as well as the Middleton family.

The Ingredients Of Change

The website clearly catalogs the [100 allowed foods](#). Listed there are the 68 pure proteins, which include all the expected lean meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, and a sampling of fat-free dairy and vegetarian proteins, including seitan, tempeh, and tofu. Among the 32 plan-approved vegetables are the usual greens, roots, and cabbage family foods.

Oat bran is key in each of the four phases. A dieter is instructed to eat 1.5 tablespoons each day during the "Attack" phase, two tablespoons during both Cruise and Consolidation periods, and a whopping three tablespoons each day during maintenance; in other words, three tablespoons every day for the rest of your life. In addition to contributing to a feeling of fullness, oat bran, which must be 100-percent oat bran and not steel cut or rolled oats, lowers cholesterol and slows down sugar absorption.

Other surprise guests at the Dukan table are [olive oil](#), [shirataki](#), and [goji berries](#). Once in the cruise phase, a dieter is permitted one teaspoon of olive oil each day; this amount, many a Mediterranean cook might argue, is hardly enough for most recipes, though. From the very start, shirataki can be used with abandon. 'The Konjac root from Asia,' in Dukan's words, is rich in fiber and has virtually no calories so it helps digestion with no downside. Goji berries, though recommended because of their anti-oxidant powers, must be used in limited quantity. On pure protein days, a dieter is allowed one tablespoon, and on proteins and vegetables days, two.