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What you eat—

Carbs, fat, protein, some combination thereof or nothing at all—determines your body's reaction to food and training for the rest of that day. Getting lean or staying lean, and adding muscle, therefore, requires doing things right, and that includes starting the day with a single goal: keep the body burning fat for as long as possible.

Me and the majority of my clients delay eating breakfast by a few hours for this goal—the easiest solution. I often get up at 6 a.m., but if I eat breakfast, it won't be until 9 am or later—sometimes much later—around 2pm.

That's a long gap to go without anything—most people need something to curb their appetite, which may be pretty strong in the morning due to the release of the hunger-stimulating hormone ghrelin.

The state of the body's metabolism when first getting moving in the morning: a fat-burning inferno.

It looks like there are now four goals when first waking, listed in order of importance

Four Early-Morning Goals

1. Control hunger
2. Keep burning body fat
3. Prevent muscle loss
4. Prolong ketogenesis / Accelerate Fat burning

Control Hunger

Morning hunger can become nauseating and hard to stave off with sheer force of will. Your first option is coffee, no sugar—although an intense sweetener is okay in limited quantity. Caffeine can increase fat burning and doesn't interrupt metabolism while the cholinomimetics help control hunger. This is what many people already do whether they understand or even know the effect.

Another option, if that's not satiating enough, is to add heavy whipping cream—a slow-absorbing source of pure fat.

Coffee is the key to controlling hunger, not the caffeine which is not an appetite suppressant; the cholinomimetics from roasted coffee beans are. Don't tolerate caffeine well? Not a problem—drink decaf. Fat burning may not be enhanced, but the decaf still curbs appetite because of the cholinomimetics, which also stimulate nervous system activity, only not as much as caffeine.

NOTE: Using caffeinated energy drinks is not an option, although I wish they were with the variety and prevalence. The sugar-free versions don't work—not normally, anyway—because they contain the artificial sweetener acesulfame potassium. Of all the sweeteners, wouldn't it figure that the only one that spikes insulin levels is the one that's in nearly all sugar-free drinks?

Keep Burning Body Fat

Goal number two—to enhance and prolong fat burning—requires eating little to no food and including optional supplements for a boost. Caffeine is the best and most readily available options, either from coffee, tea or even caffeine pills. Remember, though, getting caffeine through a source other than coffee will not help with appetite—I'm going to keep repeating this.

Prevent Muscle Loss

Preventing muscle loss while not hindering fat burning or interfering with the next goal (prolonging ketogenesis) requires a bit of finesse.

Increasing free amino acid (FAA) levels stops or attenuates potential destruction of muscle by sparing lean tissue from proteolysis, the technical term for the breakdown of intact protein structures like muscle.

A rapid rise in FAA levels in the bloodstream however spikes insulin levels. That's no good because insulin can stop fat burning.

A slow and small rise in FAA levels helps prevent proteolysis and prolong ketogenesis. Whey Isolate to the rescue. Ten grams or so — about half to 1/3 serving for most powders —raises FAA levels without over-stimulating insulin release.

There may be a small increase, but not enough to derail fat-burning.

Prolong Ketogenesis

Prolonging ketogenesis, I would say, is the least important of the goals, but why not squeeze every last bit of performance from the body? Ketogenesis requires two things to work.

The first is a lack of carbs. The second is an ample supply of triglycerides. Keeping triglyceride levels elevated forces the body to continue producing ketones.

MCT oil, because it absorbs quickly unlike other fats, raises triglyceride levels. So now, instead of adding heavy whipping cream to coffee, add coconut oil or unsweetened, full-fat coconut milk. Or throw in a tablespoon or two of coconut milk into the whey isolate protein shake.

Result: Badass Shake

Mixing the above components makes a delicious shake. I often combine all the ingredients—coffee, vanilla/chocolate-flavored whey isolate powder and coconut milk—into a single frankenstein like concoction.

Badass Abs Shake Formula

Goal	Ingredient	Amount
Control Hunger	Coffee	1-2 Cups
Fat Burning	Caffeine	150-400 mg
Muscle Protection	Whey Isolate	10g
Prolong Ketogenesis	MCT oil / Coconut Milk	1 Tbsp oil, Splash of Coconut Milk