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[Editor's Note: This article refers to a nearly 3-year experiment following an 80/10/10 low fat raw vegan diet from 2010 through 2012. The information in this article does not reflect my current dietary practices.] The 80/10/10 Diet is a low fat approach to raw veganism promoted by Dr. Douglas Graham, a long-term raw foodist and athlete, and author of the book, *The 80/10/10 Diet*. Basically, this version of the raw vegan diet recommends obtaining at least 80% of your total calories from carbohydrates (typically sweet fruits) while restricting both fat and protein to less than 10% of total calories each. Dr. Graham does not believe in the need for supplements or superfoods and stresses the importance of exercise, athleticism, sunlight, and a variety of other lifestyle habits that support the diet to promote optimal health. In contrast, the typical raw food diet that is represented in the many "cook books" and served at raw food restaurants around the country supply most of the calories from fats like nuts, seeds, avocados, and coconuts. The 80/10/10, also known as 811, 811rv, or even LFRV (Low Fat Raw Vegan) provides an alternative to the typical fat-laden raw diet that I found much easier to stick to. This epic blog post contains my experiences and observations from following the 80/10/10 diet over nearly two years (until early 2012). My 80/10/10 Journey I started experimenting with the raw food diet in mid-2009, and my husband and I committed to a 30-day raw food challenge during January 2010. After 30 days, we were both hooked. We lost weight, we felt fantastic all the time, and it was exciting to play around in the kitchen, creating all sorts of raw versions of the foods that we used to eat – like lasagna, cheesecake, and pie. We sought out raw vegan restaurants. There were two in Chicago at the time (Karen's Raw and Cousin's TV). I was so enamored by the experience of eating at Cousins (they are no longer open) that I signed up for their meal plan. I'd excitedly drive to their restaurant, pick up my meals for the next 3-4 days, fill up a container at the salad bar, and enjoy raw gourmet meals every day. But then it all went south. I woke up one morning and my stomach felt like it was full of rocks. I couldn't get out of bed. I was struggling to stay motivated about the food I was eating. My digestion had felt sluggish. And my diet, despite being raw, was starting to look like the highly processed, high-fat American diet I was trying to get away from. Then I read about the low-fat alternative to raw veganism – the 80/10/10 diet. Almost immediately after switching from a fat-based raw diet to the 80/10/10 fruit-based raw diet, I noticed significant improvements in digestions, energy, and mood. I felt full of life. And I stuck to that way of eating for almost two years! Here are some of the benefits and observations (and one hiccup!) I had during my time with 80/10/10: The Macronutrient Ratios I used the 80/10/10 macro-nutrient ratio as a benchmark. I was strict during the first six months, but relaxed a bit as I continued. Some days, I hit that ratio spot on. Over the second year, I bumped up my protein intake to about 12% of my total calories – about 75 grams per day. Because of my fitness goals at the time, I started using a protein powder in my green smoothies. I knew it wasn't completely "811-kosher", but I found that it helped me get the results I wanted. My average fat intake hovered at 10% and some days went as high as 12%. I usually had 1/4 avocado or a tablespoon of raw nut butter throughout the day. I had a Brazil nut for the selenium every day and I usually added a little chia seeds or flax seeds to my green smoothies. I never cut out all overt fats. I don't think that absolutely everyone should automatically abide by the 80/10/10 macro-nutrient ratio 100% of the time. While it worked well for me for almost two years, some people will do better with more fat and protein and less carbohydrates. If you are struggling with 80/10/10, try 70/15/15, or 70/10/20, or even 60/15/25. I do not recommend dropping fat and protein below 10% long term. I do not recommend very strict fruitarianism at a 90/5/5 macro-nutrient ratio, nor do I recommend cutting out all "overt fats" from the diet. Better Digestion The most noticeable benefit I felt on the 80/10/10 diet was improved digestion. Fruit digests quickly and efficiently. I never experienced bloating, indigestion, heartburn, or other digestive difficulties that I got on my old diet or even the high-fat raw food diet. Fruit moves quickly through your digestive tract and supports efficient digestion and greater energy levels. More Energy My energy levels were through the roof while following the 80/10/10 diet. Maybe it was all of the (healthy) carbohydrates, but I felt motivated and inspired to exercise. I took up running in the mornings and made steady gains in my distance. I ultimately ran the Chicago Marathon in October 2012 (I was no longer doing strict 80/10/10 at this point). 80/10/10 is a great diet for athletes and active people, or for those who wish to be more active and fit. It can be a challenge for sedentary people (office workers, or those with mobility issues that prevent an active lifestyle.) Amazing Fitness Gains This was one of the best benefits I had with this diet (aside from maintaining my 40 pound weight loss of course!) I always wanted to be a runner, but it just didn't feel like it was in the cards for me. I struggled to run a mile for the longest time. Shortly after going low fat raw vegan (LFRV), I started to notice a big difference in my stamina. Before I knew it, I was able to run a 5k and soon after that I was running 5ks three to four times a week with ease. I'll never forget the first time I ran 10k. I was wintering in Mexico and I had access to an outdoor track that was exactly 1 kilometer around. I told myself I was going to run 10k before I left and I DID! That has to be one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I literally went from 5k to 10k in a matter of weeks. I was able to do 5 pull-ups, which might not sound like a lot for a muscular guy, but for a girl, that's pretty good. I was at my athletic peak during the two years I did 80/10/10. The 80/10/10 diet is often promoted as a great endurance athlete diet and my athletic experiences while eating this way have shown that to be true in my case. 80/10/10 And Weight Loss People asked me all the time how I could eat so much fruit and be so thin. To be completely honest with you, it's because I ate so much fruit that I was able maintain my 40 pound weight loss. In fact, I was at my lowest ever adult weight for much of the duration of my 2-year 80/10/10 diet experiment. However, I do not think that you should put yourself on a strict 80/10/10 protocol if weight loss is your primary goal. You can lose weight with just about any diet, and 80/10/10 is much, much more than just a weight loss diet. You definitely need to drop any baggage you might have about portion sizes, calorie restriction, or eating less. Neither of these things are relevant in 80/10/10, and if you are not willing to eat many large meals each day, this diet will do you more harm than good. Plus, 80/10/10 is very hard to stick to over the long term. If your ultimate goal is weight loss, you need a diet that you can realistically stick to for life. The Amount of Food I Had To Eat When you start out on the 80/10/10 diet, you need to eat more than you think you need to. This was the biggest challenge with the 80/10/10 diet for me. I had to eat a LOT of fruit in a day in order to meet my calorie requirements. For example, on the high-fat raw diet, I could eat one whole avocado and get about 300 or so calories. The same amount of calories on the 80/10/10 would have to come from 2 and a half bananas, or 3 and a half apples. The volume of food I ate while following 80/10/10 was greater than when I ate a more typical raw food diet. I had to eat four large meals each day. Dr. Graham discusses this in his book in detail. He cites the fact that many animals, including our fellow primate cousins, eat large amounts of fruits and vegetables every day so eating more than just three small meals a day is not unusual at all. I've been eating about four meals throughout the day and it works well. It took about a week to adjust to it, but as long as I stay within 80/10/10 ratio, I don't have any discomfort eating this way. When you spend your whole life believing that you have to eat LESS in order to lose weight, it feels counter-intuitive to eat heaping portions while shedding pounds. It's virtually impossible to "overeat" while doing 80/10/10, and all to easy to under-eat – which sets you up for failure (nutrient deficiencies, intense cravings, failure to thrive). It felt very weird in the beginning to eat an entire giant bowl of fruit salad at one meal. Eating fruit meals eventually started to feel normal and routine. The longer I ate this way, the more normal it became and I felt very satisfied, nourished and even balanced with a predominately fruit-based diet. I didn't really think about the amount of fruit I ate, even though I ate more fruit in a day than most people probably ate in a week or two. Raw Gourmet Food Became Nauseating I've heard other low fat, raw vegans say that after eating low fat for a while, they couldn't stomach the fat and oil-drenched raw gourmet food that is so heavily celebrated in the movement. I completely identified with that observation pretty much immediately after switching over to the 80/10/10 diet. I haven't been to a raw food restaurant since January 2010! I don't really have a desire to do so because most of the menu will be high-fat "gut-bombs". It's so hard to find low fat, fruit-based meals at most raw food restaurants. I can honestly say that nut-burgers, flax-cracker pizza, raw cacao cookies, and raw cheesecake lost their appeal as I progressed in my 80/10/10 journey. I hate to be so harsh, but I felt like my body knew what real, whole food that grows on trees was and it didn't want anything that had been processed and refined. That stuff just didn't feel like food in my body. Gourmet raw food made me feel bloated, sluggish, and unhealthy when I followed 80/10/10. In fact, I felt the same way after eating a high-fat raw meal as I did eating a restaurant meal such as a veggie burger with fries. Positive Mood My mood was a lot better and more stable on the 80/10/10 diet. I felt content, inspired, and motivated. Many people on the 80/10/10 diet felt this way – especially when starting out. Fruit Sugars and Teeth A huge concern with eating so much fruit is about potential problems with your teeth. Dr. Graham discusses this at length in his book and puts to rest many of the misconceptions about tooth decay and its potential link to sugars and fruit. In fact, nuts and other fats can be equally as detrimental to your teeth. I did have some tooth sensitivity during the first week or so of eating 80/10/10. It's normal for me to have sensitive teeth, even before I was raw and 80/10/10. After a few days, and following the advice in Dr. Graham's book, the sensitivity went away. In fact, my teeth were less sensitive once I got into following 80/10/10. I used to use a sensitivity toothpaste every day and I inadvertently switched to a different one that wasn't for sensitive teeth. I used it for over a month before I realized it and that whole time I had no problems with tooth sensitivity. I didn't experience any tooth sensitivity or other dental issues at all during my 80/10/10 experiment. Also, I made sure that I got plenty of minerals from leafy green and other vegetables. I was pretty strict with my two large bunches of leafy greens per day rule. On average, I'd eat an entire head of romaine lettuce (in a green smoothie) AND 4 or so cups of chopped dandelion or kale in another smoothie later on. I also made sure I got outside in the sunshine as often as I could to soak up some vitamin D which is important for bone strength and tooth health. My recent dental checkup was routine – no problems whatsoever after two years of 80/10/10. I specifically asked my dentist if he saw any evidence of excessive enamel erosion, or any signs of trouble. He shook his head and said that my teeth were perfectly fine. Fruit Sugar and Weight Gain/Diabetes Risk This is the annoying question that 80/10/10'ers get all the time: "Won't all that fruit sugar mess up your blood sugar levels?". That question is right up there with the most common question vegans get: "Where do you get your protein?" Oh well, it comes with the territory I guess. From the research I've done, there doesn't appear to be a risk of blood sugar issues caused by fruit consumption. Dr. Douglas Graham discusses blood sugar and fruit extensively in this book, *The 80/10/10 Diet*. He says that the cause of blood sugar imbalance is not too much fruit in the diet but too much fat! I've had no problems with candida or blood glucose or cancer (yes, I've heard some people claim that consuming fruit can cause cancer). Now I'd love to go out and get a blood sugar monitor and test myself for a week, but I haven't so far. I don't feel the need to do so. I'm not diabetic and I don't have risk factors for diabetes. There are other people who have regularly tested their blood sugar on the 80/10/10 diet and their levels have been rock solid. It's just not something I'm worried about. No More Cravings For Sweets This probably goes without saying but I stopped craving sweets during my 80/10/10 diet experiment. That was a big challenge when I was on the typical (high-fat) raw diet. I CRAVED sweets – cake, donuts, candy – whatever had sugar in it! I used to eat a lot of raw desserts which had an unhealthy combination of concentrated sweeteners like agave nectar and lots of nuts. I would end up eating lots of fat AND sugar together which is a health disaster waiting to happen. But when I switched over to 80/10/10, I didn't crave anything sweet because my sweet tooth was more than satisfied with all the delectable, ripe fruit I ate every day. Occasionally, I did crave something savory, so I'd snack on a chard leaf or a stalk or two of celery or make a savory soup which was just exquisite! Water & Hydration I was surprised by how little water I drank while I followed 80/10/10. I used to drink a gallon or so every day, but I was drinking maybe half that, even on a hot summer day. I got plenty of distilled, nutrient-rich water from all the fruits and vegetables that I ate. I thought it was strange how many raw foodists make such a big deal about water (ionized, ozonated, "raw", etc.) when I rarely gave it a second thought with my water-rich fruit-based diet. Heat Tolerance & Cold Intolerance I've heard a lot of raw foodists say that summertime heat doesn't bother them like it used to before becoming raw. This felt especially true for low fat, raw vegans. I definitely noticed that my comfortable temperature range shifted. Temperatures in the mid-upper 80's (Fahrenheit) just didn't feel that hot to me anymore. However, I wouldn't say that I ever became "cold intolerant", which is a sign of a serious medical condition. Superfoods & Supplements Dr. Graham does not advocate the use of supplements and superfoods in his book. After reading his thoughts on the subject and taking a good look at my nutrient intake, I agreed with him to a degree. I stopped using raw cacao and other popular raw vegan superfoods. I felt that if I did need to buy expensive superfoods in order to be healthy, then the whole raw food diet concept was flawed, as Dr. Graham states in his book. Where I differed, however, was with his take on supplementation – particularly with vitamin B12 and iodine. There is no vegan source of vitamin B12, so vegans need to supplement, and not wait to see if their levels drop. They will! Also, Dr. Graham mentions sea vegetables as an unnatural food for humans (we are not sea creatures, so we should avoid eating things that come from the sea). I think that's rubbish. Avoiding iodine-rich sea vegetables, which are the richest source of iodine in an 80/10/10 diet, can lead to iodine deficiency and thyroid problems. Eat your sea veggies (dulse and kelp, especially!) Women who follow strict vegan or raw vegan (and especially fruitarian) diets need to supplement with iron, or at least make a concession and eat iron-fortified foods that may not fit within the rigid framework of the 80/10/10 diet. Vegan women who get all of their iron from plant-sources need 33 milligrams per day, which is a tall order. Eating Socially on 80/10/10 Anybody who is on a strict raw food diet will know that it is difficult to eat out at restaurants. It can be awkward to eat at family functions. It's even more difficult if you are trying to follow a strict 80/10/10 regimen. Even among typical raw foodists, it's a challenge to eat low fat, raw vegan at a social, raw food event. Ironically, I found it difficult to eat at raw food potlucks because so much of the raw dishes were loaded with nuts and oils. Raw desserts are pretty much fat-laden gut bombs. It was interesting to watch as people filled up large plates full of low calorie greens and then pigged out on high calorie (and high fat) raw desserts. The vast majority of their calories came from agave nectar, cacao, and other highly processed nuts and seeds. I just couldn't eat that way anymore. Most of the raw food restaurants in Chicago (where I lived at the time) served the high-fat, raw gourmet dishes that are heavy in nuts and oils. I haven't stepped foot in a raw food restaurant since January of 2010! I stopped hanging out at coffee shops and started hitting up the juice bars (although drinking too much fruit juice IS bad for you and your teeth). Eventually, I made some concessions and relaxed my diet enough to enjoy an occasional veggie burger on a whole wheat bun that I could load up with veggies. Over the two years of following the 80/10/10 diet, I noticed that the macro-nutrient ratio (80% carbs, 10% protein, 10% fat) was more important and made me feel better than staying 100% raw. I wanted to maintain my social life, and for me, it was more important to be able to enjoy the occasional veggie burger or hummus wrap at a bar with friends than it was to uphold a strict ideal about the human diet that would alienate me from my friends. I enjoyed cooked quinoa, brown rice, and steamed veggies. I was never part of the "cooked food is poison" camp. I think you can be a super-healthy person on a mostly raw, low fat vegan diet and that it is not necessary to go 100% raw if you are struggling too much to do so, or if it is alienating you from a life (and friends) you enjoy. 80/10/10 Grocery Shopping Grocery shopping was easier when doing 80/10/10. I just stayed in the produce section and filled my cart. I bought a ton of fruit and vegetables every week. It felt a bit strange rolling my shopping cart to the checkout with 6 pineapples, 4 large papayas, 6 cantaloupes, 12 bunches (yes, bunches!) of bananas and 15 pounds each of mangoes and oranges in my cart and knowing that all this food will be gone in just a few days! As fat as cost, I would say I spent about the same on groceries that I spent when I ate the high-fat raw diet with superfoods like Goji berries, cacao, and maca. What I used to spend on expensive, organic raw nuts and superfoods went toward purchasing more fresh, organic, and ripe fruit. This was a typical grocery haul during my 80/10/10 days. Supplementing With Cooked Food Six months into following the 80/10/10 diet strictly, I began adding small amounts of cooked food into my diet. The longer I ate raw foods, the more I realized that I didn't want to do it 100%. So I turned to supplementing my raw diet with low fat, cooked foods like quinoa and brown rice to provide concentrated calories without adding excess fat. I felt more balanced eating a cooked dinner, and having some wiggle room for social or family situations. For me, it was more important to keep my fat intake low than it was to stay 100% raw. The One Hiccup In My 80/10/10 Journey You might have heard me say that you should get your blood tested periodically to see if you are deficient in anything. Well, I finally had my blood tested two years into my 80/10/10 adventure. My triglycerides, fasting glucose, and thyroid were all normal. My total cholesterol was 50 points lower than that it was when I was 22 years old! At that time, my HDL was flagged as high. My total cholesterol was nudging too close to the "elevated" range (191/200). My family has a history of high cholesterol. So it was a huge relief when my post-80/10/10 lab work showed all cholesterol levels well in the normal range! The only thing that came back abnormal was that I had low creatine, which underscores the importance of ensuring that you meet all of your essential amino acid requirements, not just your protein requirements in grams. Evidently, I had neglected to keep up on my methionine intake (despite exceeding the daily overall protein intake recommendations) and I think that it likely played a role in my low creatine. I resolved this by doing a 5-day creatine load (5 grams of creatine monohydrate for five days) and I was (and still am) extra vigilant going forward to track both methionine and lysine, two essential amino acids which are easily deficient in a vegan diet if you are not careful. Everyone is different based on your age, gender and family history. I strongly recommend that you get your blood tested and not just follow what I did and assume that you will be fine. You might feel fine, but your blood work is the ultimate indicator of your health status, so don't forget to "check under the hood" every now and then. Is 80/10/10, or a Fruitarian Diet, Really Healthy Over Your Long Term? I have since let the 80/10/10 diet slip from my lifestyle as I focus more on eating a diet that is still largely raw, but also includes healthy, cooked foods like quinoa, brown rice, and beans. I no longer consider myself a raw foodist. I do not consider fruitarian diets as a healthy, sustainable diet for everybody – and some forms of fruitarianism is unhealthy over the long term. Nutrient Deficiency Risks On Strict Fruitarian Diets I find that when the dietary ratio is skewed past 80/10/10, nutrient imbalances show up. For example, many fruitarians push the macronutrient ratios beyond 80/10/10 (for example, 90/5/5), which increases the risk of getting inadequate protein (more on this below), calcium, iron (especially in women), zinc, selenium, and iodine. These nutrients could also be low in an 80/10/10 diet or any diet if you're not paying attention to what you are giving your body for nourishment. Both methionine and lysine, two essential amino acids that can be a challenge to meet adequate intake guidelines on vegan diets already, may be impossible to get enough of when fat and protein intake are dropped too low and calories are not dramatically increased. Essential fatty acids may fall below established adequate intake guidelines, and DHA/EPA omega-3s may be non-existent in the diet since supplementation is often frowned upon (so no algae oils). To resolve this problem, many fruitarians dramatically increase calories in order to increase their nutrient intake. Of course, it's virtually impossible for your average office worker to consume 3000+ calories per day of fruits and vegetables. Many fruitarians don't blink an eye about eating 8-12 bananas in a single meal, or 30 bananas in a day. Most successful fruitarians are athletes, usually distance or endurance runners or bicyclists where a legitimate demand for high-calories and a massive amount of carbohydrates fuel rigorous physical activity. However, it is unrealistic to suggest that a very high-calorie, strict fruitarian diet is feasible for everybody who does not or cannot be an athlete, and therefore eat like one. The other way that some fruitarians resolve the insufficient nutrient intake problem is by promoting skepticism about the established nutrient intake guidelines set by government and scientific organizations. I've heard some people claim that low fat raw vegans don't need 1000 milligrams of calcium per day (the scientifically established recommendation), and that they are just fine consuming only 500 milligrams per day. Others cut established, scientific dietary intake guidelines on some minerals or essential amino acids in half so that they fit within their own nutritional analysis of their ultra-fruitarian diet. They either cite some alleged "conspiracy" about why the nutrient guidelines are so high (IE: "only SAD or cooked food eaters need that much of this or that nutrient"), or they simply use their own unscientific reasoning (IE: "women in Africa don't get as much calcium as westerners and they don't get osteoporosis, therefore it is safe for me to cut my calcium intake in half"). The problem with this train of fruitarian "logic" is that instead of adapting the diet to fit established scientific facts and guidelines based on experimental observations established by a majority of scientists within a rigorous, peer-reviewed process, they adapt the facts to fit their fruitarian diet ideology. If you ask me, that's a recipe for a health disaster! More Pitfalls of Strict Fruitarianism Besides the nutrient imbalances that may manifest when macro-nutrient ratios tip beyond 80/10/10, there are other pitfalls of a strict fruitarian diet. One common side effect of a fruitarian diet is dental problems, which are generally caused by poor dental hygiene and/or insufficient minerals in the diet due to the avoidance of dark, leafy greens like kale and dandelion. Some fruitarians avoid overly bitter greens because they believe that the bitter taste is a signal that the bitter taste is a signal that they are somehow harmful or not optimal for the human body. Many fruitarians prefer mild-flavored lettuces to very bitter greens like kale. However, my research and personal experience consistently shows that minerals fall below established dietary guidelines on a raw vegan diet when leafy greens such as kale and dandelion are avoided or minimized, or when greens are consumed in amounts smaller than two bunches per day (about 6-8 cups), every day, especially when the total daily calories are below 3000. I generally follow the 80/10/10 macro-nutrient ratio and have not had dental problems despite the amounts of green smoothies and sweet fruits I eat. My most recent dental checkup (January 2013) revealed a perfect bill of health. I attribute that to my mineral rich diet of dark, leafy (bitter) greens in green smoothies and proper dental hygiene. Fruitarianism and Libido Other side effects of a strict fruitarian diet include decreased libido, which is often promoted as a "spiritual benefit". I've read, while shaking my head in disbelief, quite a few blog posts from fruitarians who claim that a tanking libido is a good thing. I probably don't have to tell you that it is absolute NOT a good thing! A tanking libido after being on a strict fruitarian diet for a while, especially in men, could signal insufficient testosterone production due to a variety of factors that can be exacerbated by a fruitarian diet that is too low in fat, deficient in zinc, selenium, vitamin D and too high in fiber. Low libido is also a symptom of hypothyroidism, possibly exacerbated by an iodine deficiency from long term avoidance of iodine-rich foods such as sea vegetables. [Interestingly, hypersensitivity to cold is also a symptom of hypothyroidism. A lot of ultra-low fat fruitarians complain of cold intolerance.] Symptoms such as low libido, mood changes, decreased energy, changes in menstruation, diminished athletic performance, or any of the other symptoms of low testosterone or hypothyroidism should be checked out by a qualified health care professional. Blood tests for testosterone (total and free) as well as a thyroid panel may confirm a hormone issue, or rule it out. Fruitarian Diets and Protein While it is true that fruit contains protein, including all essential amino acids, fruitarian diets are notoriously low in protein. The longer I research health and nutrition, and the longer I ate a mostly raw, vegan diet, the more I came to appreciate the importance of protein (from plant sources). A lot of vegans, especially raw vegans, make the mistake of minimizing the importance of protein to the effect that they poo-poo even the slightest concern about it. While it is true that you can get adequate protein (total grams) on a raw vegan diet, you should never let your protein intake fall below established dietary guidelines. In general, obtaining 10% of your calories from protein as part of a calorie-sufficient 80/10/10 diet provides adequate protein for an average, sedentary or moderately active person. Someone can meet their minimum protein intake on a 2000 calorie-per-day 80/10/10 vegan diet that is 100% raw. Dropping protein intake below 10%, however, may put you at risk for under-consuming protein. Some people might need to consume more than 10% of their daily calories from protein. While you are extremely unlikely to experience kwashiorkor (a protein deficiency disease that is rare in developed countries) from inadequate protein intake, I'm not convinced that long-term, low grade protein insufficiency is something that should be dismissed, or taken lightly. While protein over-consumption is a health concern in western diets, let's not completely overlook protein. It is still an essential nutrient. Not only should you be sure you are hitting adequate intake guidelines set by scientific organizations (not protein supplement websites), you should also make sure you are getting adequate amounts of all essential amino acids including methionine and lysine, two amino acids that play hard to get on vegan diets, let alone highly restricted, ultra-low protein fruitarian regimens (when protein is less than 10% of total calories). Who Is Fruitarianism (or 80/10/10) Best Suited For Fruitarianism, or very high-carbohydrate diets, is best suited for endurance athletes. Runners, cyclists, even swimmers, may benefit from a very high-calorie, fruitarian diet that meets all nutrient intake recommendations set by established scientific organizations. This diet promotes a lean, slender body with very little body fat. It is easy to become underweight on this diet, so extra care needs to be taken to boost calorie intake and not be too restrictive on the diet. Fruitarianism is challenging for those who are sedentary. While I found that 80/10/10 worked quite well for me (I spent a lot of time working on a computer), anything over 90% of calories from carbohydrates can be a problem for some people. I often found it necessary to tweak my macro-nutrient ratio, sometimes doing 70/15/15, for example. A strict, calorie-sufficient, 100% raw fruitarian diet that meets 100% of established intake guidelines for ALL essential nutrients might be impossible for a typical office worker to follow when it comes to caloric intake requirements and the massive volume of food needed to obtain sufficient nutrients. For those who want to "bulk up", add muscle or put on healthy weight, fruitarianism (and strict, raw vegan 80/10/10) is a real challenge. I don't know of any bodybuilders who eat a fruitarian diet, or 80/10/10 for that matter. Strict fruitarian diets are never appropriate for children and pregnant/nursing women. Should I Give A Fruitarian or the 80/10/10 Diet a Try? Before jumping into the 80/10/10 diet or fruitarianism, ask yourself why you want to make the change in diet. If you are trying to lose weight, you don't need to become a fruitarian to do it. Sure, you could lose a lot of weight while eating massive quantities of sweet fruit, but are you prepared to make the lifestyle change? Are you willing to regularly train in a physical sport at an athletic level? Are you willing to eat 3000 or more calories per day from sweet fruit? Can you picture yourself chomping down on a 12-banana meal? Perhaps a mostly raw, low fat vegan diet would be more appropriate than a rigid and strict fruitarian one that eliminates all overt fats. Looking at a fruitarian diet as a short-term strategy to lose weight is a terrible idea. Once you end the diet, the weight will come right back on. If you are trying to detox, a fruitarian diet is seemingly ideal, but only for a very short period of time. I do not recommend undergoing any dietary detox regimen for more than 10 consecutive days, and no more often than four times in a year. You don't need to embrace strict fruitarianism in order to facilitate detox. In short, I find that a macro-nutrient ratio between 65-80% carbohydrates (with lots of fruit), 10-15% protein and 10-20% fat tend to work for most people on a calorie-sufficient, mostly raw food, plant-based diet. This is generally a nutrient-sufficient diet (provided sufficient intake of calories). Skewing macro-nutrient ratios too far in either direction tends to cause problems. Because of this, I do not recommend any diet protocol that reduces fat intake below 10%, nor do I recommend any strict, rigid diet that defines itself primarily by one group of food based more on ideology rather than science and modern human physiology. My recommendation is to give the 80/10/10 diet a try if you feel yourself pulled in that direction, but feel free to tweak the macro-nutrient ratios after doing it for 30 days. Resist taking it to the extreme and use a nutrient tracking software (like Cron-o-Meter) to ensure that you are meeting scientifically established nutrient intake guidelines. If any nutrients are missing or inadequate, tweak your diet by modifying the macro-nutrient ratios and add "non-fruitarian" foods. Ultimately, you should take some blood tests to ensure that your diet is working for you. In a perfect world, you'd do a "baseline" blood test before you start a low fat or 80/10/10-type diet. After about eight weeks or so, retest and see what your numbers are doing. For men, I highly recommend doing a baseline testosterone (total and free) before and after a dramatic diet protocol. For both men and women, it's important to make sure that your body is getting the nutrients it needs from your diet, but also, it is critically important to ensure you're giving your body what it needs to produce sufficient hormones. The big take-away here is that there's something to be learned and gained from any diet experiment. But don't let any diet define you, and don't define yourself by any diet. Join our weekly Nature Magick e-mail with insights on the moon phase and self-care/magick tips. You can also download two printable sheets to enhance your daily practice. Privacy Policy

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