The Raw Till Whenever 7 Day Challenge

Improve your relationship with food and learn to trust yourself again.

Challenge Guide

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What Is The Point Of This Challenge?

The Raw Till Whenever Challenge is all about improving your relationship with food through delicious plant-based recipes and information that will help you learn to trust yourself again. So many of us come from a past of disordered eating where we have massively restricted calories or have done crazy fad diets and pills that don’t work long-term.

The message of Raw Till Whenever is simple. Focus on eating as many whole food plant-based meals as you can, eat when you’re hungry till you’re full and love your wonderful self wherever you are on your journey. Challenge yourself this week to eat as many whole food plant-based meals as possible and be super kind to yourself!

The nutritional aspects of Raw Till Whenever is not something that we came up with on our own. We take the advice and look at the science from the pioneers in the high carbohydrate plant-based movement. They all agree that whole plant-based foods are the best for finding your natural weight and that eating intuitively (aka eating) is how you should gauge your caloric needs.

We’ve also included more tips in this challenge guide to help you improve your relationship with food.
5 Common Reasons Why You’re Not Losing Weight On A Plant-Based Diet

A lot of people feel like they are really stuck when it comes to health & weight loss, this might be you. Either you are new to eating a whole food plant-based diet or you’ve been eating a plant-based diet for some time now and wondering why you’re not losing weight or you’re possibly gaining weight. You’ve probably heard of the testimonials of people losing +70lbs or you’ve seen Hannah’s transformation on YouTube. You might be wondering why these people are getting results and you’re not.

There are a number of common reasons that we come across as to why this might not be happening for you and that is a big part of this 7 Day Challenge. Remember that sustainable weight loss is typically between **1 to 1.5lbs per week**. From Hannah’s experience and many others, this number is a healthy realistic amount to lose. That is over 50lbs in a year!

We also want to remind you that weighing yourself everyday can be very stressful. You will want to put your scale away and weigh yourself every 1-2 months. An **even better gauge** is by how your clothes are feeling.

Keep reading for **5 of the most common reasons** why you’re still not losing weight on a plant-based diet.
A big part of our message is about eating as many whole plant-based foods as you can. That doesn’t mean you will banish eating any type of processed food for the rest of your life. If you tell yourself that you will never have a vegan muffin for the rest of your life (because flour is a processed ingredient) then we believe you can develop an unhealthy relationship with food.

Aim to do the best you can. If you can manage to eat whole foods 99% of the time and that’s what works for you then great! If you can only manage 80% of the time then that’s great as well. Just continually strive to eat as many whole plant foods as you can.

Whole plant-based foods are very filling, calorically dilute and satiating which makes it the perfect food for sustained weight loss. On top of that, whole foods are nutrient dense which means you are going to get plenty of vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytonutrients to support a healthy body. This means that while eating a sufficient number of calories your body will be nourished with all those nutrients. When you are consuming a lot of processed or refined foods, you are missing out on critical nutrients for health and while you are overfed on food, your body is still undernourished. This can cause you to overeat on foods that are hindering your ability to find your natural weight.

Some common culprits that may be hindering your weight loss are oils, processed vegan foods, dried fruits and fibre broken foods (bread, pasta, crackers).
Oils are the worst of all and should only be used minimally or not at all. Oils are extremely high in calories, highly refined and have basically no nutritional value.

Processed vegan foods are the tofurky type food products you see in the grocery store. Yes, they are plant-based but are highly processed and refined. They are typically quite high in fat and are not complete foods. We still eat them as an occasional treat but are not something we consume on a consistent basis.

Dried fruits such as raisins, dates, figs or prunes have had the majority of the water removed either by dehydrating them in the sun or in dryers. If you want to consume them in moderation that is totally fine. Sprinkling some raisins on a bowl of oatmeal is great rather than sitting down and eating an entire bag of raisins. Dried fruits are very dense in calories but don’t provide the same satiety as if you were to eat the original fruit with all the water intact.

Fibre broken foods (bread, pasta, crackers) again are fine to eat in moderation. Instead of just eating a bowl of whole wheat pasta for dinner, fill up the bowl half full with the pasta and the other half with calorically dilute vegetables and starches such as broccoli, corn, green beans, cauliflower, green peas or carrots.

A great video to watch and article to read would be the one on ‘How To Lose Weight Fast’ that is on the Raw Till Whenever blog to learn more about how to optimize your results. http://www.rawtillwhenever.com/how-to-lose-weight-fast/
It is very common to hear in the plant-based community that you can eat as much food as you want without any consequence. We agree to a certain point because we promote intuitive eating, which basically just means eat when you’re hungry till you’re full. There are plenty of people who when they switch to a plant-based diet and eat intuitively, they get immediate results and lose weight effortlessly.

We also understand that everyone is unique with a unique history and this can really make a difference. Derek for example, comes from a history of binge eating. He would literally force feed himself at times when he would binge. This caused his stomach to stretch and become quite large. Consequently he has always been a big eater. This lead to him overeating on a continual basis (even when he went plant-based) and caused him to feel lethargic and tired after meals. He felt tired because he was eating till he was so stuffed and was not listening to his body. After slightly reducing his portion sizes, he noticed that he felt quite satiated when he ate smaller meals and wasn’t forcing himself like he was before.

In Japan, there is a practice called ‘hara hachi bu’, which means eat until you are 80% full. Many of us are so used to force feeding ourselves till we are stuffed and even if we are eating a plant-based diet, it can still be causing weight gain because our satiety/hunger mechanism is broken.

Here is how you practice hara hachi bu. Eat half of what you normally would eat and check in with yourself. Are you still hungry? Can you eat some more? If you are then eat some more.
Once you begin to feel some stomach pressure, you are at the **80% full stage**. It may take 15-20 meals in order to reset the muscle memory of your stomach to get used to eating less food. A lot of times when people think they are eating till they are satiated, they are really eating until they are stuffed. You will have to **trust this process** as it may be scary at first but over time you will become more in tune with exactly how much your body needs.

During this 7 day challenge. Be mindful of how much you are eating. **Check in with yourself** to see whether or not you’re overeating. This isn’t necessary for everyone but if you are used to stuffing yourself then this is a great practice for you.
Something that we notice that is promoted heavily is drinking large smoothies. For some people who are very active and already lean, this can be necessary to replace the calories burnt through their exercise and fast metabolism. For people who are struggling to lose weight, large smoothies could be hampering their weight loss results.

The reason for that is liquid calories are not registered in the body the same way a whole food is. When eating a food in its unprocessed form, you have to chew it! Our teeth aren’t accidental, they are there for a reason. Chewing is an important part of our digestive process and slows us down when we are eating. Drinking your calories in a smoothie form doesn’t provide the same satiety as it would if you chewed the whole foods.

We understand that fruit smoothies in the morning are nice and convenient so if you still want to consume smoothies, make sure you’re making smoothies that are a reasonable size. If you’d normally only eat 4 or 5 bananas in their whole form, then only blend 4 or 5 bananas in to a smoothie, not 10.

Something else you can do is blend half of the fruit, chop the other half and mix the two in your smoothie jar so that you have a chunky smoothie. Chunky smoothies are great because it is still convenient but you are still having to chew most of it.
Have you ever found yourself eating for no reason at all? Grabbing a snack here or there. Or maybe just eating for the sake of eating because you’re bored.

If you are guilty of mindless eating and you’re struggling to lose weight then tracking your daily food intake is great to see how you are doing. We’re not asking you to count calories, just track everything that goes in to your mouth for 1-2 weeks. What foods (this includes any liquid calories too) are you eating that might not be the healthiest for you?

You can keep a paper journal or use a phone app such as ‘My Fitness Pal’ or ‘Livestrong Daily Plate’. You’d be surprised about what foods you’ve been eating but totally forget. After 1 or 2 weeks, check back and see and I think you’d be pleasantly surprised at the results.

It may even come to the point where you are about to eat a treat or snack that you know you shouldn’t be eating and you won’t eat because you don’t want to track it. Try this habit out, if you eat out of boredom you’ll shed some light on your mindless eating.
The last reason where we see a common mistake that people make is with regards to their exercise regimen. Many people focus on endurance training rather than speed training. For example people will want to run a longer distances rather than improving the speed and time in which they can run a shorter distance.

So say you run a 5km race. You get all excited and start training for a 10km race. There isn’t anything inherently wrong with this, if you’re looking for a more effective strategy for weight loss, you should focus on improving your 5km time. If you can run 5km in 27:00, focus your training around improving that time to 25:00... then 24:00... then 23:00.

Why is this important? As you do more intense exercise, you break down your muscles so that they have to grow back larger. As the muscles grow back stronger and you have more muscle mass on your body, your resting metabolic rate increases (which is the amount of calories you burn without doing anything). This makes it much easier to run a sustainable caloric deficit and is great for toning your body.

If you keep focusing on speed rather than endurance, your body will lean out much easier because of the caloric deficit that is fueled by a higher resting metabolic rate. Also when you do more intense exercise, your body has to recover from the hard workout, that also requires more calories and therefore a caloric deficit is easier to maintain.

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Another example would be with cycling. Focus your exercise on the bike around cycling up hills or going really fast on the flats. Spend 10-30 minutes warming up at an easy pace, then give it your all for 3-5 minutes and then allow yourself to cool down for another 10-30 minutes.

You don’t have to spend countless hours running, cycling, swimming, walking in order to get results. You have to focus on high intensity in intervals. That type of training will be extremely effective with any weight plateaus or if you’re having trouble losing weight.

Remember that the majority of your results will come from your food choices and we have 2 recipe books that will give you lots of inspiration to make delicious meals at home for you and your family. To get you started with the challenge, there are 3 recipes you can start making today and you will get 3 more recipes during the challenge.

Remember that you will receive the first recipe 3 days from when you signed up for the challenge so this gives you time to purchase any ingredients you don’t have on hand.

On days 2, 4, 6 and 7 try some of the other recipes at the end of this guide or check out the Raw Till Whenever blog where there are more whole food recipes going up all the time.

Wishing you all the best on your journey!

Hannah & Derek

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**Checklist**

Before we begin the challenge, there are a few ingredients and kitchen tools that you will want to have on hand so that you can follow along with all the recipes. You may want to purchase some of the items for the Day 5 recipe on Day 4 for ultimate freshness.

**Ingredients**

**Day 1 Recipe** - 2 Lbs Russet Potatoes, 1 Small Red Onion, 2 Stalks of Celery, 1 Large Ripe Avocado, 2 Tbsp Brown Mustard, 1 Tsp Dried Dill, 1 Tsp Apple Cider Vinegar, 1/2 Tsp Maple Syrup, Black Pepper, Salt

**Day 3 Recipe** - 1 Yellow Onion, 28oz Can Fire Roasted Tomatoes, 2 Cans of Chick Peas, 1 Tsp Cumin Seeds, 1 Tbsp Fresh Ginger, 4 Garlic Cloves, 1/2 Tsp Cayenne, Salt, 2 Tsp Garam Masala, 1 Tsp Coriander, 1 Tsp Ground Tumeric, 1-2 Cups Uncooked Rice

**Day 5 Recipe** - 8oz Rice Noodles, 4 Tbsp Powdered Peanut Butter, 1 Carrot, 1 Red Bell Pepper, 1 Cup Baby Broccoli, 1 Bunch of Cilantro, 1/4 Cup Bean Sprouts, 2 Scallions, 1 Lime, 1 Tbsp Tamari, 1 Tbsp Maple Syrup, 1/4 Tsp Garlic Powder, 1/4 Tsp Red Pepper, 1/4 Tsp Ginger Powder.

**Kitchen Tools**

Blender, Sharp Knife, Stock Pot, Colander, Large Saucepan, Mixing Bowls
Ingredients

1 Cup Uncooked Short Grain Brown Rice
1/2 Cucumber, Peeled & Diced
1 Carrot, Shredded
1/2 Avocado, Cubed
Sesame Seeds
Tamari, Wasabi & Pickled Ginger (Optional)

Method

Rinse and drain your brown rice and combine with 2 Cups of water in a small sauce pan, bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and cook until all the water is absorbed (about 30 minutes).

While the rice is cooking peel, dice and prepare your vegetables.

Once the rice is done and has cooled for a bit transfer to a serving bowl.

Add the vegetables, sesame seeds and whatever else you like on top.

Serve with wasabi, tamari and pickled ginger if you like!
Sauce Ingredients

(This is enough sauce for 2 dishes)

2 Cups Cauliflower, Chopped
2 Garlic Cloves
2 Tbsp Hemp Seeds
2 Tbsp Nutritional Yeast
Juice 1/2 Lemon
1/4 Tsp Salt
1/4 C Water

Method

First we are going to boil our cauliflower in a pot of water until soft (about 5 minutes) then transfer all of your ingredients to a blender and mix until creamy and smooth. Pour over your favorite pasta. Add sautéed vegetables for a more hearty and filling pasta.

For this dish I used whole wheat fusilli noodles. I also sautéed asparagus, spinach, sun dried tomato, mushrooms, red onion and yellow bell pepper in a little bit of water and added that over the noodles before I mixed it all together.

The sauce also keeps well in the fridge for up to 3 days and it tastes great on cold pasta as well. ENJOY

Ingredients

16oz Pasta
Sautéed Vegetables
Creamy Red Pepper Pasta
Method

To roast your pepper, first place oven on broil setting. Place red pepper on the top rack and let roast until it turns black (about 10 minutes.) Once the pepper turns black flip it on the other side and repeat this step.

Now that the entire pepper is roasted (and black) let it cool for about 10 minutes. What I like to do is put it in a tupperware container with the lid on to retain the moisture, this makes it easier to peel.

Once the peppers are cooled a bit we are going to peel the roasted black skin off. I usually run the peppers under cool water as I do this. You can discard the skins and seeds and throw the rest in your blender. Then we will just blend this with the rest of the sauce ingredients until creamy.

You can use whichever type of noodle you want for this. I would recommend a brown rice noodle where the only ingredient is brown rice (not brown rice flour) this is the best type of noodle in my opinion. You can also use zucchini spiralized and then sautéed in a pan with a little water for a few minutes to soften, it’s amazing you must try it sometime! Cook your pasta according to the package, pour sauce over top and add fresh basil and voila!
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Thank You!

We are both sending you our heart felt gratitude. We really hope that the recipes and information will assist you on your journey to optimal health and finding your natural weight.

We are very active in the Raw Till Whenever Facebook Group (www.facebook.com/groups/RawTillWhenever) so if you have any questions, you can direct them there. There are over a thousand other people who are just as excited as you and we will all be able to help you and support you on this journey. We’re in this together!

All of our love,

Hannah & Derek