

You're listening to episode 193 of The Devoured Podcast. Welcome to Devoured, the podcast for women like you, who have tried restrictive diet after diet and are ready for simple solutions and resources to help you lose weight for the last time, from a place of abundance and peace. If you're looking to end the yo-yo of comfort eating and rigid weight loss protocols, and instead step into living your life on your terms while losing weight in the process, you're in the right place. Okay. Party people. Welcome to the show. We are going to get down and dirty talking about how our bodies use calories. In Lean + Liberated, when I work with my clients, we're not tracking calories. I don't think tracking calories is good or bad, but I do think that tracking calories is not a behavior that we want to, or are going to use for the long term, just like diets.

So we can conflate calorie counting with dieting. It's not. Dieting is the emotional aspect of, for the most part, restricting yourself in order to achieve a goal that you actually can't get to and can't sustain from restriction. Like the diet is a miserable part, calories and calorie counting can be neutral. However, practicing getting really, really good at calorie counting to me is not a useful use of someone's time.

So we don't do that in Lean + Liberated as a reminder, what we do is that we make intentional plans for our meals. We make the plan the night before, the morning of for your meals for that day. And when I say intentional, you're really sitting down and being like, all right, what are the meals that are going to be the ones that like, give me a happy day, that give me a day that I know I'd be proud of? And you do your best, and you learn, and you rinse and repeat, and you discover, oh yeah. When I give myself salmon and a salad, that was a great first try at making a dinner. And now I know that was really yummy and I want some potatoes and I want to make sure there's a dressing I like on the salad. And then it's like a banger of a meal. It's that type of a thing.

So we always, in my opinion, want to be approaching our food and nutrition intake from the behavioral standpoint, because the nutrition standpoint is pretty straightforward and obvious. Like if I really press most people, they're going to say, okay, I probably need to get some sort of protein, which is correct. I need to get some sort of a starch or a carb, even if I'm scared of them, I probably still need them somehow. Correct. I need fiber. So I need vegetables. Probably need some different types of vegetables. Correct. And I need water. Correct. Correct. And in there somewhere, I need some different types of fats. Correct. You've accomplished nutrition 101. Good job.

Okay. So once you understand the foundation of the different foods that make up calories, although different foods have calories in them, the water doesn't, but foods have more or less water in them, depending on what types of foods they are. So today on the show, I want to talk to you about the four things that affect how many calories your body is using, because I want this to be, if it isn't already, I want it to be for you, a neutral subject. Your body is just your body. Calories are just calories, whether you count them or not. You do not have to count calories in order to lose weight. Just like you have not needed to count calories in order to gain weight.

There's no mystery here. We're not doing any of this to be special. It's literally how it can happen. You don't have to count calories. And if you want to cool, but if you don't want to, that's great too. And there are so many options that are really natural that support and align with the behaviors that are going to give you a really happy, healthy, beautiful life. Okay. So let's go through them. This is going to be just like a banger of an episode. Okay. You ready? The number one thing, the first thing is our basal metabolic rate, which is otherwise known as your metabolism. And the basal metabolic rate, some people will call it their BMR. And you especially see people call it BMR when they're more into like the nitty gritty of health and nutrition, maybe they've done body building or have tried to be tracking macros or looking at really changing their body compositions.

Some people are more familiar with the concept of a BMR and other people, this might be the first time you're hearing it. All good. Okay. So your basal metabolic rate, otherwise known as your metabolism is the amount of calories you burn while at rest on any given day. And I need you to hear this part. Your basal metabolic rate can be up to 70%. It's like 60 to 70% of the total daily calories your body uses for energy. So hear this. Stop trying to kill yourself in the gym to burn more calories. It's a really ineffective and an inefficient way to lose and maintain any weight loss that you desire. Okay. For the most part, your metabolism is 70%. Just your body being alive, burns 70% of its energy by just being alive, regardless of your activity level. That's number one.

Number two, your non-exercise activity thermogenesis, otherwise known as you're NEAT, you might hear people throw that term around, N-E-A-T. Your NEAT. Okay. This is the amount of physical activity that you get beyond what it takes for your body to be alive that is not planned in as exercise. Okay. This activity level number is dictated by the rest of the type of movement you get during the day. So you're walking around, you're going upstairs to change the laundry. You are having to walk into a store after you drive your car into the parking lot, you are doing some chores. You're getting up off of the couch to help your kiddo. All of that, all that movement that you do in your day, which you do, do that movement is considered your non-exercise activity thermogenesis. You might be planning it in. You're like, okay, I'm going to do some chores. That's part of a plan, but it's not necessarily, this is my conscious time to be moving my body as exercise.

I find separating this from exercise, both useful, but also kind of confusing. So I just, I don't feel like many people say that. They just talk about their NEAT and then your EAT, which I'll talk about in a second and the TDEE. And like all these terms and they sound really cute and technical. But to me it's like, you just have your planned movement. All right. I'm going to make sure I get in my 30 minute strength workout. Oh, I want to make sure I get a 20 minute walk today. But you also have all the other times you're walking and moving your body and picking up heavy things off of the ground too. Okay.

So number three, you now have your exercise activity thermogenesis, your EAT, E-A-T. And I've already been talking about it. This is an intentional movement. Things like cardio and strength, sports, hobbies that are physical, you get daily or weekly, right? Like in average. And hear this, your exercise activity thermogenesis is at most about 5% of the energy that you burn. And listen, how much real estate is it taking in your mind, your level of exercise? How do you feel during the day if you do or don't work out? What do you make that mean about yourself?

This is huge. This is us nitpicking a teeny tiny part of the story that is absolutely a waste of energy. I'm not usually one to say, what is a good or not good use of someone's time. But I will say it is a waste of energy to have any sort of emotion around your exercise that is not an emotion that is compelling. That is compelling for you to have like, oh, I love my walks. I love being out in nature and seeing the different seasons. Or that's my time to listen to podcasts, or that's when I call a friend, or it's when I just have quiet time. Ooh. I love when I am doing those darn lunges during my workouts that I do a couple times a week because man, I don't love it in the moment, but I feel really, really restored and relaxed after those good workouts versus, Ooh, I didn't work out again today. I suck. Should probably eat less.

They barely matter for that. Okay. The only difference there is, if your workouts are allowing you gently over time to be building and maintaining muscle mass, then gently over time, they might be contributing to your basal metabolic rate because you are growing muscle mass, which is active body tissue, but don't get in the weeds about that, because it's still not the big part of your body just being a body existing in space. Remember your basal metabolic rate can be up to 70% of the total daily calories, but that includes things like your digestion. That includes things like your breathing, right? The energy it takes for your lungs to pump, the energy it takes for your heart to beat. That is what comprises by and

large your metabolism, is those parts of your body that you forget about, but because you can't quite see them.

So the fourth one is the thermic effective food, the TEF. And people love to have this be a super secret part. They like get really cute about it. It's like, Hey, here's my swipe post. Here's my carousel on Instagram all about the thermic effective food. What. All this means is that it takes energy to digest and absorb your food. Okay. That doesn't have to be surprising. That's just another part of your body. Your body has to work in order to do things and your body has to do things and you eat food. Food doesn't just magically disappear after you swallow it, even though you don't see it until it's poop later. Okay. The level of effort it takes depends on what the food is. And this is where people get really fancy with things. Okay. But the end all be all, is that it just takes more effort for your body to digest and absorb protein than it does carbs and fats.

And it's not a huge slice of the pie, but this is why you'll see a lot of diets emphasize making sure you're getting an adequate protein. It's why I make sure with my clients, right, they're free to eat whatever they want, but at the basic rubric, we want to make sure you're getting in that palm full of protein at each meal. Because not only does it help make sure that your muscles are getting the energy that they need as you're going about your daily life, but also it can have a thermic effect. Your body takes a little bit more work. And so some people you'll see, try to do the dial of saying like, let's have a really, really, really high protein diet and your body's going to take all this energy to burn all the protein. But I want to ask you, is that truly liberating for you?

I think for most people making sure they're getting in quality protein often enough is a game changer. But we can always take things that are game changers and if we use them with the energy of us not loving ourselves, we can take that to just be another diet. And I've seen a lot of people. I used to work with people, I've been in different scenarios and what I'm just in now and how I work with clients. I've been in gym scenarios. I've worked with people who have done body building. I've worked with people who have done power lifting, I've helped people with water cuts before. I understand the power of protein. And I'm here to say, you probably don't have to be eating 200 grams of protein every single day in order to do the things that you want to do with your body. I'm just going to say that. Okay.

So the total sum of the four above, your basal metabolic rate, your non-exercise activity thermogenesis, your exercise activity thermogenesis, and the thermic effect of food, the total sum of those is your total daily energy expenditure, your TDEE. Now from this, I don't want you to be making calculations. And most of the time when people start to learn this information, they then say, okay, cool. Where is my calculator? So I can plug and play. And I can make some general assumptions about how much activity I'm getting during the day. I can like plug and play my height and my weight so I can get a better idea of my BMR. No. Here's what I want you to take from this information and it's behavioral. I want you to see that 70% of your caloric needs are from you existing in space, and that by you doing chores or working at a standing desk, that does contribute to your overall activity levels.

And most people blow intentional exercises, quote, unquote, weight loss benefits way out of proportion. And don't focus on the other happy benefits of intentional exercise. I'm going to keep drilling this in. This is why in Lean + Liberated. I have you do behavioral change. You're making conscious intentional decisions about your food choices, but all foods are on the table. And I do recommend stepping away from flour and sugar for at most two weeks, just to give yourself a break from how hyper palatable they are. They can have like a tight grip on our tongues. So when we just give ourselves a break, you should reintroduce them after that break and intentionally just like any other food. Okay. This is why when you're at a plateau, but you're feeling like you're doing everything so right, but then we come to find out that you're intentionally planning your meals, but aren't quite intentionally remembering that you eat outside of what you plan.

That's why there's no shame there. You don't even have to change anything. What does change is the level of awareness of your behaviors. And if they're aligned with what you say you want. That right there is really the turning point when weight loss goes from being out of your control and overwhelming to a reasonable and straightforward process. Because when you feel safe, being aware of your choices, than weight loss is incredibly unsexy and it's incredibly boring. And that's kind of the whole point of things here, making weight loss rote, and boring, and pretty achievable for anyone who wants it. This is also why so many diet plans with strict food rules stop being necessary. Like in Lean + Liberated, I do have my clients choose when they are away from foods, but it's not part of the weight loss per se, aside from the benefits of fasting, like being able to tune into your hunger and satisfaction cues more readily, and having that very gentle uptick in autophagy.

You see that from the studies. But don't think for one minute that fasting is some magic bullet. And that's also why I don't have you track calories, like I was saying earlier in the show. Because calorie tracking still isn't helping you tune into what your appetite, and your hunger, and your satisfaction are telling you. Like, there's really no need to force a high carb day on your workout days. And then a low calorie, low carb day split every other day, depending on what you're doing and tracking all of it. Because all that strategy really is trying to do is that it's trying to replicate someone else's natural hunger and satisfaction cues. And it's cool if you get there naturally, but it's not going to be what's needed for most people. What most people need to understand is that for the most part, and this is neutral, okay, if you have feelings about it, we got to chat about that.

Most people need to understand that they overestimate how much they move, meaning they think they move more than they do, and they underestimate how much they eat. And then they have behaviors because of their relationship with that overestimation and then the underestimation. They have behaviors that reinforce and double down on how much they move and how much they eat. So it's calories in calories out, but with a foundation of behaviors first. Because how many times have you heard, okay, calories in calories out. And then you're like, okay, fine, screw it. I'll go do a low calorie diet. And then you do the low calorie diet and it doesn't respect your hormones. It doesn't respect the types of food you like, it doesn't respect your schedule. It doesn't add into your life and you start to feel tired, and cranky, and miserable, and cold. And so then you take a break from it and you take that break, but you still haven't learned about how to be intentional with the foods you're eating, even just from a place of awareness.

And so you take that break, but that break includes thousands of extra calories, which are neutral. But if you are now consuming thousands of extra calories and it doesn't feel neutral, then the cycle continues on and on of intense restriction and deprivation. And then intense breaks where there is an intense accumulation of a calories. Okay. So, and there's research too, right? Like there's research just recently too, and I'll post the link to the journal article that really shows us that caloric underestimation, like that's not a new concept in terms of research, but what is a little bit newer is that the authors, and I'll link to this in the show notes, authors of this study were noticing that calorie estimates, regardless of someone's body mass, like old studies used to think like, okay, the higher someone's body mass is the more that they underestimate how much they're eating, meaning that they tend to overeat.

But truly for anyone, whether they have a high or low body mass, it really tends to be that the more food that you see, that you have at meal sizes that can happen gradually over time, the less sensitive you are to the total amount of food that you're eating. Okay. This is why being able to be, and this is what the authors found. Okay. I'm just going to read this straight up from the abstract. The authors also find that using a piecemeal decomposition improves calorie estimation and leads people to choose smaller, but equally satisfying fast food meals.

And in this study, they were looking at people consuming fast food meals. Meaning when we keep our foods more basic and we understand, okay, where is my vegetable in this meal? What is my protein? What is the source of carbohydrate? Where is the fat coming from? They're more just shaken out and we're able to see more clearly, which component is which component. Then our satisfaction remains high. And we have, and are able to tune in to our more intuitive ability to look at a meal and understand how much energy that meal has. And remember, calories are just energy. We have so many emotions around that word calorie, but all the calorie is, is a unit and a measurement of energy.

So when we're talking about calories in calories out, it's just energy and energy out. So I hope that that was helpful for you today to hear. The point of understanding your BMR, your NEAT, your EAT, your TEF isn't just so you can go throw those terms around, but you can, if you want to. But the point is not to make calculations from those. The point is to use those and understand what am I doing behaviorally that is making it feel like I am distant from my goal of weight loss? Because if you're not losing weight in one shape or form, one way or another, the calories are at a level that is not allowing you to lose the weight. And that doesn't mean the calories are too low. Even if you have a lot of days where calories are too low, or you feel like a large portion of your day, you're eating low calorie. There is a counterbalance to that. And that counterbalance is behavioral.

Think about the people who are not eating all day. And then they finally get a break at the end of the day, and they eat a huge amount of food in order to feel that fullness, in order to take the emotional break, right? All the other subjects we talk about on the show. Right. So those are subjects for a different day, but I just wanted you to have this overview. And I want you to see that 70% of your caloric needs are from you existing in space. That's partially why really restrictive diets, really low calorie dieting can feel okay initially until it really, really sucks. It really, really sucks because your body is always going to try to protect you. And it's actually going to ask you for enough calories, consistently enough so that your heart can beat. And so that you have nice, great digestion. It's not a bad thing. It's actually a really, really beautiful, literally life saving process that your body asks for enough food.

So the power is when you allow that to be neutral and the process for that. Well, Hey, that's what we do in Lean + Liberated. I won't lie. But I'm always sharing with all of you, how you can start doing it too. You can use the journal. You can make intentional food choices. You can use the process to help you step on the scale and start to notice that relationship with the scaled number. Right. You can start to separate out, not to be a robot, but to really say, oh, I'm allowed to have emotions. And I don't have to make these food and nutrition and life and belief choices from a reaction. If they want to be from a reflection, I can do that. And I believe I can do it because I am doing it.

Okay. So that's the show this week. Thank you so much for being here. And hey, if you've gotten this far, listen, it would mean so much to me if you would take two minutes out of your day, and if you're to write a review of this podcast, hopefully a positive one, but just write an honest review. It goes such a long way. It makes a big, big difference. And I just can't wait to keep offering all of you these episodes. So I will see you next week. Bye. Did you know, you can find more support from me on my website. Go to Lucia Hawley, L-U-C-I-A-H-A-W-L-E-Y.com to connect.