The 40/30/30 Diet is balanced between carbohydrates, proteins and fats, thus not causing cravings for any of these three nutrients through deprivation. This balance of nutrients is designed to switch the body into a fatburning mode. In the diet, 40 percent of total calories are derived from carbohydrates in the form of mostly slow-acting or low-glycemic starches, vegetables, grains, beans and fruit; 30 percent from unprocessed and quality fats and oils such as olive oil, nuts, avocado and the natural form of tropical oils; and 30 percent from lean, complete protein in lowfat cottage cheese, lean red meat, poultry, seafood, fish, soy and whey.

This diet has been proven over a period of more than five years by various researchers in both research projects and training programs for international-level athletes. Participants typically lose body fat and unhealthy weight, gain muscle mass, and raise their HDL (“good” cholesterol) levels.

Our bodies consume blood sugar as fuel for energy, but store excess fuel as body fat due to that remarkable storage hormone produced by the pancreas known as insulin. How much simple sugar (white sugar, for instance), then, should our diet contain to deliver that correct level of blood sugar? The answer is: none at all.

At a stable blood sugar level our bloodstream contains about two teaspoons of glucose. Since all carbohydrates -- including such unlikely candidates as lemons and spinach -- once digested, are absorbed into our bloodstream as glucose, our bodies' sugar requirements are easily met. And, unfortunately, easily exceeded.

Our bodies do not need any pure sugar at all, nor do they need processed carbohydrates like white rice, white-flour pasta, bagels, breads and cereals, which raise blood sugar levels more than sugar itself. The digestion of slow-acting or low-glycemic complex carbohydrates, proteins, and fats provides an adequate supply of blood sugar. In fact, the right amounts of protein and dietary fat are crucial because they slow down the entry of carbohydrates into the system and allow for extended hunger satisfaction. Dietary fat is actually the best blood sugar stabilizer, while protein is considered neutral in this respect.

The longings for particular foods that we so often feel when following some new diet or nutritional recommendations are indicative that what we are eating is unbalanced in some way. A balanced diet should not leave us with cravings for some food type not included. The optimal diet is one in which you do not have to use will power to succeed because balancing the body’s chemistry is the key. The bottom line is that too much or too little of the wrong kinds of carbohydrates, proteins, or fats can cause health problems. The following is a simple overview of our bodies' nutritional requirements.

**Carbohydrates.** We need complex carbohydrates from starches, vegetables, legumes, whole grains and fruits to provide fuel in the form of blood sugar for energy-burning brain and muscle activity.

**Fats.** We need fats in the form of oils, nuts and seeds to help balance the blood sugar level, provide the raw materials for hormones, assist in long-term energy, and strengthen cell walls and mucous membranes.

**Protein from both lean animal and vegetable sources like white meat poultry, fish, lean meat, low-fat cottage cheese, tofu and whey helps to stabilize blood sugar, promotes cell growth and repair, assists in hormone production, cell metabolism, bodily fluid balance, maintenance of the immune system and functioning of digestive enzymes.**
A Balanced Diet

Meals need to consist of a balance of carbohydrates, proteins and fats. A stable blood sugar level is one of the rewards of a balanced diet. With stable blood sugar, you have fewer health risks, extended energy, balanced moods, and greater mental focus and attention.

As an elementary, common-sense concept of nutrition, balance might hardly seem to be worth mentioning were it not for the fact that it is so often ignored. Living mostly on junk food, as so many Americans do, is one way to assure an unbalanced diet. Another way is going on some fad diet that restricts you from eating some of the foods your body needs to stay healthy. Carbohydrate loading by athletes is an example of knowingly eating an unbalanced diet.

When carbo loading, athletes often eat a diet in which 70 percent of the calories are derived from carbohydrates, 15 percent from fats, and 15 percent from proteins. As you might expect, they tend to get a quick energy boost that is followed by an energy low and loss of mental concentration. It’s no surprise that we hear so often, for example, of marathon runners “hitting the wall,” cyclists who “bonk” and tennis players who “lose their focus.”

For sustained physical and mental effort, regardless of whether in competitive sport or daily life, a far better ratio has proved to be 40/30/30. This balance between the three kinds of nutrients results in a more stable blood sugar level. A stable blood sugar level in turn helps you to control hunger and permits you to function optimally on less food (that is, fewer calories) than you would be likely to eat with a fluctuating blood sugar level.

To put it another way, when the calories that you derive from carbohydrates, fats, and proteins are in the 40/30/30 eating equation, you won’t feel hunger pains in spite of eating less food.