

# Shape up fast

## Lose the paunch in time for the beach

Hollywood nutritionist Dr Fred Pescatore says the most efficient way to lose weight is to pick the right proteins for your body. [Barbara McMahon](#) reports

When celebrities have to get into shape quickly for a film, TV series or red-carpet event, they call on the services of dieting experts such as Dr Fred Pescatore. The Manhattan-based nutritionist — a former protégé of the weight-loss guru Dr Robert Atkins, who devised the high-protein, low-carb Atkins diet — helps them to shed pounds, fast.

Last month, for instance, Dr Pescatore flew to Los Angeles to assist an actress who wanted to drop 8lb in two weeks because she had an awards show to attend. His weight-loss strategy for this 5ft 9in star began with his rather punishing-sounding one-week detox, which consisted of three days of consuming only herbal teas, broth and water, then four days when eggs, avocados, nuts and finally fish were gradually introduced. In the next week she ate foods rich in amino acids — lean meat, fish and eggs — and the pounds began to drop off.

Speaking at his office, Dr Pescatore says: “With the bigger divas you also need to get their personal assistant on board, and the person who cooks or buys groceries for them, so everyone knows what she can and can’t eat, but if she follows the programme she’ll lose the weight easily. For celebrities it’s all part of the job.”

Although the doctor has a celebrity clientele (his consulting room features pictures of previous clients Renée Zellweger, Sarah Jessica Parker and Christy Turlington) he also has a thriving private practice where “civilians” seek his help in losing weight and keeping it off.

The half-empty box of tissues on his desk is there because new clients cry a lot, he reveals. “They cry because it seems like they’ve tried everything and nothing works, and they think there’s something wrong with them,” Dr Pescatore says. “Sometimes it’s just because they haven’t found the right diet.”

His latest book, *The A-List Diet*, is for people who don’t have a personal nutritionist at their beck and call. It builds on the high-protein, low-carb strategy that Dr Pescatore says is the basis of his 20-year career and is “the gold standard for staying



Dr Fred Pescatore

lean and thin”. It also adds something new — amino-acid balancing.

Central to Dr Pescatore’s method is a theory that an increased consumption of amino acids will supercharge a person’s metabolism and speed up weight loss. And, although his diet programmes are usually bespoke, he has used his fat-reduction plans to create a workable weight-loss programme for all.

Broadly speaking it is a high-protein, low-carb diet full of foods rich in amino acids. If you undertake the one-week detox followed by the diet plan you can expect to lose up to 15lb in two weeks, Dr Pescatore says.

Women are told to consume more fish and vegetables, and men more meat. “Men require vastly more amino acids than women and the ones they require are abundant in meats,” he says. “That doesn’t mean women can’t eat meat, they are just better served by eating more fish and vegetables.”

The diet is packed with foods that are high in amino acids — the top three being beef, lamb and wild salmon, along with eggs, chicken, pork and other fish — and complex carbohydrates in the form of vegetables. Some dairy products and low-sugar fruit are also allowed, but anything that contains added sugar is forbidden.

There are no calories to count and very little portion control; many foods from the list can be eaten without restriction.

“Getting the amino acid balance just right is the future of low-carb, higher-protein diets,” Dr Pescatore says.

“It’s the missing link in all the other higher-protein diets out there, including my previous diet book, *The Hamptons Diet*. “Science is changing constantly and these latest findings will help anyone weigh and feel healthier.”

Amino acids, put simply, are the building blocks of protein, playing a crucial role in almost all biological processes in the body, and are necessary for building and maintaining muscles and vital organs. The body cannot make essential amino acids, so they must come from food, Dr Pescatore explains.

However, various factors come into play that prevent our bodies from receiving a full and balanced supply of amino acids. Pollution, smoking, drinking and eating



processed foods can prevent our bodies from fully using what we eat or extracting all the nutritional value from particular foods, he says.

The best way to get amino acids is through animal protein. “If you’re not rotating your proteins, are vegetarian or vegan or getting your protein from poor sources, you are likely to lack these crucial elements for a supercharged metabolism,” Dr Pescatore says.

Each person needs a different ratio and amount of amino acids. “An individual’s amino-acids needs will depend on the relationship between their hormones, metabolism and the macronutrients [proteins, fats and carbs] they consume,” he adds.

Dr Pescatore believes that our hormones affect how successfully our bodies absorb amino acids. This means that men and women of different ages, with varying levels of hormones, will need to change

diets to optimise the impact on their metabolism. A young man, for example, should be consuming a very different diet to a menopausal woman.

He identifies five “dieter types” — young women, perimenopausal women, menopausal women, young men and andropausal men — and details the optimal amino-acid intake for each category. When a person has the right combination of amino acids and a fully functioning metabolism they will find it easier to lose weight, he says.

“Hormones are made of amino acids,” Dr Pescatore says. “If you don’t have the right combination of amino acids to support healthy hormone levels then weight loss, metabolism and other bodily functions will not be as efficient.”

Chronic inflammation, largely caused by our dependence on sugar, can also prevent people from losing weight, he adds. “Consuming too much sugar can turn the

# Lose weight in two weeks

## The celebrity nutritionist’s diet plan

Dr Pescatore says you can lose as much as 10lb in a fortnight if you follow his plan. Eat as many high amino-acid protein foods and as many vegetables as you like from the list below. Limit dairy and fruit, according to the guidelines. For more efficient weight loss, focus on the foods recommended for your age group.

### Eat as much as you like

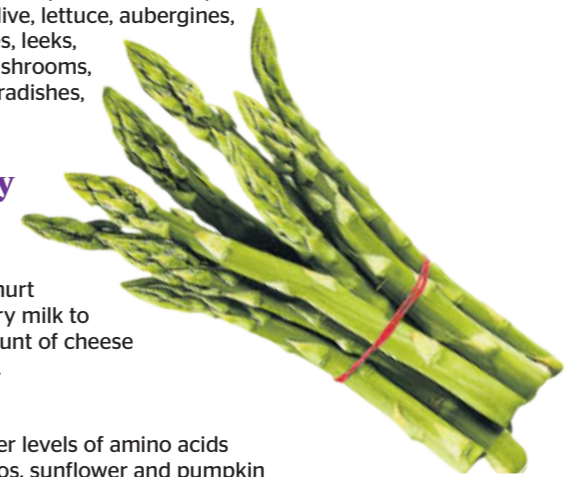
#### Protein

You can eat as much protein from this list as you like, because these foods are all high in metabolism-boosting amino acids. Chicken, lamb, pork, salmon, eggs, sea bass, tuna, herring, monkfish, cod, John Dory, mackerel, sole, red snapper, anchovies, sardines, sea trout, rainbow trout, clams, scallops, crab, calamari, mussels, shrimp, lobster, prawns, squid, pheasant, duck, goose, soy protein, seaweed.



#### Vegetables

You can eat as many vegetables from this list as you like. Asparagus, kale, green beans, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, brussels sprouts, bok choy, avocados, artichokes, endive, lettuce, aubergines, courgettes, squash, chillies, leeks, spring onions, onions, mushrooms, rhubarb, yellow peppers, radishes, parsley, rocket.



### Only small daily portions

#### Dairy

Avoid dairy milk and yoghurt completely. Limit non-dairy milk to 250ml a day. A small amount of cheese (55g a day) is permissible.

#### Nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds with higher levels of amino acids include almonds, pistachios, sunflower and pumpkin seeds — but nuts and seeds will also help by keeping you full. Don’t eat more than a handful a day, however. Other recommended varieties that are full of fibre, protein, iron, zinc, B vitamins and other nutrients, and help to protect your heart, lower blood pressure and reduce inflammation include walnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, cashews, peanuts, chia seeds, Brazil nuts, pecans and flaxseeds.



#### Fruit

Stick to low-sugar fruits in small amounts. You can have the equivalent of a handful of the following three times a week: blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, melon, pears, oranges, limes, lemons, apples, clementines, plums, gooseberries, passion fruit, cranberries.

#### Fats

Use small amounts of olive oil, macadamia nut oil and avocado oil for cooking and dressings. You can use up to two tablespoons of butter a day.

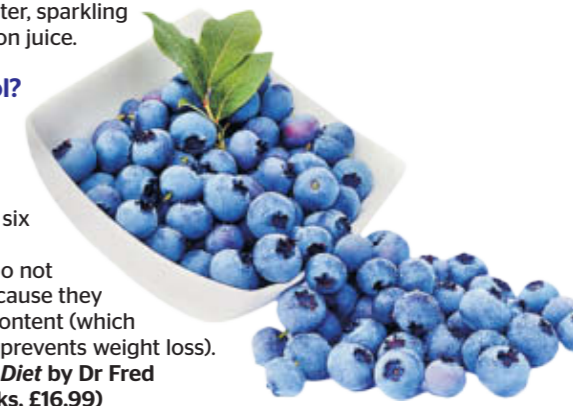
### What to drink

Coffee, tea, herbal tea, water, sparkling water, fresh lime and lemon juice.

#### Can you drink alcohol?

The diet will be more effective if you avoid alcohol. If you do drink, it must be moderate (nine units a week for men and six units for women). Stick to clear spirits and do not drink beers and wines because they tend to have high sugar content (which causes inflammation and prevents weight loss).

Adapted from *The A-List Diet* by Dr Fred Pescatore (Benbella Books, £16.99)



#### What men over 40 should eat

Between the ages of 40 and 55, men will likely begin experiencing symptoms of andropause (decreasing testosterone levels), which can include weight gain, especially round the middle. Since testosterone is a key component in building protein, you will need more amino acids to take up the slack — so eat pork, grass-fed beef, turkey breast, scallops, parsley and asparagus.

#### What to eat if you are perimenopausal

This is the time in a woman’s life when her hormones really begin to fluctuate, making it a difficult time to lose weight. I’d recommend plenty of cod, seaweed, cauliflower, garlic, avocado, kale, kohlrabi, cucumbers, Brazil nuts and sunflower seeds.

#### What to eat if you are menopausal or postmenopausal

Reduced oestrogen may lower metabolism. A lack of oestrogen also causes the body to use starches and blood sugar less effectively, which increases fat storage and makes it harder to lose weight. Eat all types of fish, lamb, eggs, nuts, watercress, fennel, endive, kale, broccoli and asparagus.

#### What to eat if you are a woman in your twenties or thirties

For women, this is the sweet spot for weight loss. It is a relatively easy task to manage weight in this period. Eat plenty of grass-fed, lean beef, fatty fish such as salmon and tuna, halibut, cucumbers, white mushrooms and pumpkin seeds.

#### What young men should eat

Young men have everything going for them when it comes to weight loss. They tend to have excellent metabolisms and high testosterone levels. For optimal weight loss they should eat plenty of pork, turkey breast, spring greens, mustard greens, kale and peanut butter.