

A Huge New Harvard Study Into Diets Has Stunningly Controversial Conclusions About Weight Loss

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This is going to cause something of a revolution. But will it help you be more productive?

Absurdly Driven looks at the world of business with a skeptical eye and a firmly rooted tongue in cheek.

If you're going to [lose](#) weight, you have to [cut out](#) something.

The [question](#) is: "Which something?"

Each diet you try has a focus on one particular thing. This makes it easier to market, of course.

Some, of course, see dieting as a purely cosmetic exercise.

At the heart of it, however, isn't just how you look, but how you feel. And how that affects what you can and can't do. Work-wise, for example.

Studies [have shown](#) that when you go on a diet, your brain may begin to fight against it, believing that it knows better.

And when your brain begins to focus on something like your weight, it may not be fully attuned to doing the things you have to do at work.

Some who think themselves supremely motivated believe that one way to keep weight down and be supremely productive is to skip breakfast or even lunch.

Yet research [has shown](#) that thinking on an empty stomach doesn't really go that well. You might think you're being productive, but you're not.

What, though, might be the best diet to burn calories and still be productively functional?

Scientists at Harvard thought they'd look to see whether the reduction of one thing might burn more calories than the reduction of another.

Specifically, well, [their exciting title](#) in the *British Medical Journal* says it all: "Effects of a low carbohydrate diet on energy expenditure during weight loss maintenance: randomized trial."

Does removing carbs from your diet help you burn more calories? Or does removing fat have a greater effect?

Well, they found that those struggling with their weight who went on a high-carb, low fat diet burned far fewer calories than those who replaced their carbs with fat.

Some 250 calories a day was the difference.

I can't imagine that this study will create sudden agreement among everyone in the diet industry.

There's too much money at stake, after all.

It does, however, begin to suggest that every calorie isn't the same. Which could eliminate the effectiveness of calorie-counting as a sure way to calculate weight-loss potential.

This study may have a great influence, though, because it was extensive. The researchers monitored 164 adults and made sure of their precise food intake over 20 weeks.

Moreover, the researchers were direct in their conclusions: "Lowering dietary carbohydrate increased energy expenditure during weight loss maintenance."

It almost seems like scientists are now devolving into two camps: those who believe the greatest evil is carbs--menaces such as pasta and white bread--and those who still conclude that fats are the even greater evil.

Perhaps the first confident step toward losing weight involves simply eating less.

Yet if this study leads to a consideration that calories from different sources have different effects on the human body, humans may have to make detailed daily choices in the hope of losing even a few pounds.

And in the hope of performing better in all aspects of their lives.

Why does dieting have to be so complicated? Especially with Thanksgiving coming along.