The Pole Diet
An Eating Plan Designed for Pole Dancers
The Pole Diet!

Anytime I ever heard the word diet I either felt one of two things: inspiration for a hot new body or the fear of not being able to stick with it!

But here I would like to present something simple, practical and functional: an easy-to-follow eating plan for the gal who is thinking about pole dancing, who has tried it and sure she wants to move on as well as the hard-core acrobat, the one who has mastered the Iron-X!!!

I have tried lots of different eating plans such as low carb, high protein; no-fats; no dairy; 3 times a day meals; 6 times a day meals; just cutting out snacks, juice-only, et cetera et cetera.

The one thing that I have found in all my years of study, reading, experimenting and then finally using is BALANCE. All foods are there or a reason! Even the chocolate cupcakes serve an important purpose for the ripped athlete and the overweight dieter. Treats like that serve an inherent purpose: keeping your body from thinking it is deprived forever of certain types of foods and holding on to every ounce of fat you want to rid it of! More on that later...

Well, I could ramble on but let’s get to the “meat” of the diet, shall we?
First, some simple “rules” or if the word “rules” scares you and makes you immediately want to rebel, let’s try “guidelines”:

1. Eat 5-6 times a day
2. Make each meal balanced with protein and carbohydrates
3. Before you eat something, ask yourself, “What am I going to do for the next 3 hours?”
4. Drink a gallon of water a day
5. Take a daily supplement

What? You might ask. I will explain!

Pole dancing is mainly a strength-training, anaerobic activity...but it can also incorporate much cardiovascular/aerobic exercise, depending on how much dance you do that involves using your lungs...you can do floor work or spins as well as dance that does not involve lifting your bodyweight.

But overall, it can be considered something like a circuit training workout. With this being said, performance nutrition is required. This is looking at what you put into your body as fuel that will affect everything you do physically. And when you are attempting to lose weight, strengthen tendons, build muscle, increase flexibility and endurance...your fuel becomes extremely important!

This is one of the reasons I came up with the idea for the Pole Diet. Pole dancing is a strenuous exercise that requires pole athletes to take note of their nutritional needs.
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Eat at least 5-6 times a day.

Just eating a couple of big meals is not enough. Your blood sugar levels will go up and down and irritation and temptation to snack can set in when you are too hungry. You can keep your energy levels stable by ingesting smaller meals throughout your day.

In giving your hard-working body a consistent and frequent supply of the right balance of protein, fat, and carbohydrates, the need to store anything as fat for later use is reduced.

So don’t think of meals as a table spread anymore; a meal can be a small apple and a cup of low-fat cottage cheese, a plate of whole wheat spaghetti, sauce and broiled chicken breast or a low-fat tuna-salad sandwich.

It is a good idea to sit down when you have your meal, relax so that you can digest it easier and have a glass of ice cold water and a slice of lemon or orange in it before or after the meal.

Meal plans and portions

Each of your meals (or mini-meals) should consist of equal portions of protein and carbohydrates. Incorporate 3 servings of vegetables into meals throughout the day.

Vegetables can be used in a breakfast omelet, inside of a sandwich, in soup or pasta or as a snack.

To keep it simple, I do not like counting calories or weighing portions on a food scale; I use portion sizes and the Glycemic Index (found in this book).

Portion sizes can be the palm of your hand or about the size of a deck of cards.

One tablespoon of unsaturated fat, such as olive oil should be included daily in your meals. This can be drizzled over spinach and tomatoes. Eating cold water fish such as salmon is another way of getting your good fats.
What am I going to be doing for the next 3 hours?

The only exception to the rule above (equal portions of protein and carbohydrates) is to ask yourself the question: what activity am I going to be doing in the next 3 hours? Sleeping? Running? Studying? Inverting? (In that case don’t eat too much!)

If you are planning on sleeping, then it makes no sense to eat a meal of pasta and veggies or fruit because you will not be burning up those calories.

If you are planning on resting, then a little more protein would be in order. If you are going to be pole dancing or running, then a meal with a little more carbohydrates is going to give your muscles the glycogen stores they need to exert themselves and the protein will help keep your energy up.

Also, your pre-workout carbohydrates need to be low glycemic. This helps keep simple sugars such as from orange juice from entering the bloodstream too fast.

I have included a table with foods and their place on the index later on.

A note: Casein, a protein found in milk, is good to use as your before-bedtime meal. It releases protein into your bloodstream more slowly while you sleep, helping your body during its overnight ‘fast’. Skim milk with a banana is a good bedtime meal.

Drink a gallon of water a day.

Our beautiful bodies are made up of 55-75 percent of water...so, it seems to me that water is important to staying alive and functioning well!

Drinking 8-10 glasses of water throughout your day will ensure that you are replacing all of the fluids that we lose through working out, sweating and other bodily functions.

Don’t wait until you feel thirsty to drink your water, either. By this time, the first stages of dehydration have started. A reduction in water means thicker blood also; and thicker blood is harder to pump to your heart and muscles, making you feel tired, weak and not able to perform well.
Drinking water throughout your workout will help you to recover faster and better.

It will help your muscles to be able to utilize fat as a fuel (fat-burning!) and also allows your kidneys to do the detox functions for your body instead of your liver which can REALLY slow you down!

Having enough water will also mean that your liver will be able to metabolize body fat better...so when you eat carbs, make sure and drink enough water so that the glucose does not get stored as glycogen and the sugars will be used right away for energy!

It’s best to drink your water throughout the day, at least 20 minutes before your training or performance and also after high-carbohydrate meals.

**Take a daily supplement**

Even if we ate perfectly, we still cannot get all of the vitamins and minerals that our bodies need.

Because you will not always eat 5-6 perfectly balanced meals a day or because your body’s needs for different vitamins or minerals may fluctuate or because high-stress or extra training can deplete demand more from your body and diet, you will need to supplement your diet.

Find a high-quality supplement at a whole or natural foods store. Some of these will have a more digestible base that the vitamins are contained in, making it easier for your body to digest and access what it needs.
**What about Junk Food?**

You cannot, or should not, completely eliminate junk food unless you are training for a fitness competition where any salt or sugar intake could mess up the appearance of your ripped physique. Even then, salty/fatty/sugary snacks and treats are eliminated for just a while.

Why keep the ‘bad’ stuff around? Because the Hostess chocolate cupcakes or Doritos that you so love are actually working in your favor.

It is best explained like this: our bodies understand when we are depriving ourselves and our bodies react to this by holding onto any little amount of calories that it gets.

If we allow a cheat meal or even a whole cheat day after eating whole, natural foods all week, then our body understands that the salt/sugar/fats are not gone forever.

This also helps us not to be tempted to give into the fat-laden, nutritionally-empty meals like fries, milkshakes and burgers. When I can have a meal of double-cheese cheeseburger, fries and my vanilla malt on the weekend, then I am happy to eat well and disciplined the rest of the week.

Most junk foods are high in fat, salt and sugar and low in nutritional value so they are not to be a part of your regular diet.

**Is fiber an issue?**

Fiber is equal to friend. Fiber comes in 2 forms and they are both equally good for you: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber helps us with lowering cholesterol. Insoluble fiber acts as ‘roughage’ or like a broom sweeping out our intestines. This type of fiber keeps you feeling full.

Fiber also comes only from plants. Fiber doesn’t give us any calorie/energy value but it helps us skinny down and healthy-up in several ways.
• Fiber helps you out also by lowering the glycemic response of your meals.
• Fiber decreases cholesterol levels
• Fiber promotes good intestinal functioning
• Fiber helps to even out how fast sugars enter the bloodstream
• Taking fiber is a natural way to lose weight by making us feel fuller and eat less
• It prevents colon cancer, diabetes and heart disease

A good idea is to take a spoonful of a fiber like Metamucil in a glass of water ½ hour before a meal.

Other good sources of fiber include:

• Oatmeal
• Corn on the cob
• Whole rye bread
• Popcorn
• Beans
• Steamed vegetables
• Cauliflower
• Carrots
• Sunflower seeds
• Pears
• Bananas
• Apples
• Dried figs
• Prunes
• Oranges

Listening to your body

Your body talks...and not just by growing in the wrong areas! Our blood sugar levels fluctuate throughout the day. Right after you eat, it goes up and you are ready for physical activity without the loss of energy.

The harder or more intense your physical activity, the more your energy levels are reduced. Glycogen is used up and needs to be replenished in order to have energy again.
At this stage, we feel the tired and groggy and look for things like a Snicker bar or cup of coffee to jolt us back to life!

Doing this only gives us the “quick fix” where our blood sugar level is raised and drops just as quickly due to the use of simple sugars to bring it up.

Paying attention to your blood sugar levels by how you feel (tired, weak, energized, etc.) will let you know when it is time to eat again. This is why it is a good idea to eat a balanced mini-meal every 3 hours so that your blood sugar stays on an even keel and you keep a stable amount of needed energy throughout the day.

**What to eat before and after training**

I used to take a drink of orange juice in the morning before my runs.

I am not sure that it did any harm but gave me a quick shot of glycogen re-fill for my muscles. But it would have been more beneficial and I may have been able to run longer if I had chose my pre-training ‘meal’ with a lower glycemic index. (The table is below.)

Choosing a food that has a lower glycemic index, such as beans or fruit, will ensure that your blood sugar levels will be stabilized longer for your workout time. So many times I went to pole class and ate something small and sugary before my workout and halfway through I felt like fainting.

Eating a half cup of beans and cottage cheese, a protein bar or some fruit salad with a little tofu will prevent this from happening. Your workouts will be longer and you have a chance to practice those new moves before exhausting your muscles!
The Glycemic Index

What is the glycemic index and why is it important?

The glycemic index of a food shows us an idea of how much our blood sugar levels are going to be raised after we eat that food. For example, if I eat a bowl of Cheerios before my workout, with a glycemic index of 74, my blood sugar levels are going to shoot up and come back down faster than if I ate a cup of barley and red lentil soup, both glycemic indexes of 25.

The lower the glycemic index of a food, the less my blood sugar levels will go on a roller coaster ride that leaved me feeling tired and drained as well as hurt my workout times and performance levels.

Here is a table that includes a sampling of foods and their index numbers in several food groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breads</th>
<th>Cereal Grains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed grain bread</td>
<td>Barley, pearled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oat bran bread</td>
<td>Rice, instant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pita bread, white</td>
<td>Sweet corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat bread, whole meal</td>
<td>Rice, brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White bread</td>
<td>Rice, white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast cereal</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice Bran</td>
<td>Yogurt, low-fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Bran</td>
<td>Milk, skim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerios</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream of Wheat</td>
<td>Legumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oatmeal</td>
<td>Lentils, red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special K</td>
<td>Kidney beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornflakes</td>
<td>Butter beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crispix</td>
<td>Pinto beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baked beans, canned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kidney beans, canned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and Fruit Products</td>
<td>Pasta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear, fresh</td>
<td>Fettuccine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>Spaghetti, white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Vermicelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>Macaroni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Linguine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins</td>
<td>Tortellini, cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Protein power**

What is protein and why is it important?

Protein is responsible for muscle growth and function...of some importance, don’t you think! There are complete and incomplete protein sources so don’t be fooled into thinking that pasta or fruit is what you need to build muscles.

Complete protein sources are from foods such as milk, chicken, whey, fish and eggs.

Incomplete protein sources are beans, oats, bread, some nuts and rice.

Utilize the foods list below in the “Your Cupboards and Fridge” section to choose your proteins.

One of the best proteins for athletes is whey protein powder. It can be purchased at most grocery, pharmacy or health food stores in powder or read-to-drink form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snacks</th>
<th>Soups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td>Tomato soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn</td>
<td>Black bean soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretzels</td>
<td>Split pea soup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrots, cooked</td>
<td>Yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato, new</td>
<td>Beets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato, mashed</td>
<td>Potato, baked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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You can mix the powder with water, non-fat milk or fruit juice, ice cubes and frozen fruit such as chunks of banana or even a tablespoon of natural peanut butter for a healthy meal. Whey protein comes from milk and is known to be important to anyone looking to increase their muscular strength. Whey is one of the best protein sources for athletes since the amino acids are retained by our bodies and therefore goes right to work building and strengthening muscles.

The amino acids in whey enter our bloodstreams faster than any other protein source which makes it the perfect after-workout/training meal. After training, your muscles are in need of more protein (amino acids) for recovery and to prevent muscular breakdown.

At a cellular level, many things are happening with your muscles after they are taxed by exercise and whey provides all the balm and building blocks they need to recover and grow.

Some good smoothie recipes are:

- Chocolate flavored powder, non-fat milk, a tablespoon of natural peanut butter, ½ frozen banana and ice cubes for a Chocolate PB Banana Shake

- Vanilla powder, non-fat milk, ½ frozen banana, mixed frozen berries such as raspberries, blackberries and blueberries for a Berry Smoothie

- Chocolate powder, non-fat milk, ½ cup coffee and ice cubes for a Frozen Cappuccino

- Vanilla powder, non-fat milk, frozen strawberries and ice cubes for a Strawberry Shake

- Chocolate powder, non-fat milk and frozen raspberries for a Chocolate Raspberry Smoothie
Fat does not equal fat

All fats are not created equal...and all fats do not just make us ‘fat’. It’s more in which ones you utilize, how much you take in and how you use them with your meals that make the difference.

Fat is what is responsible for the healthy shine of your hair or the texture of your skin. Fat also helps bring the shape to our breasts and the curves on our female bodies. Fat also keeps us from looking emaciated! (A good thing!)

Fat is also needed for the fat-soluble vitamins that we ingest such as vitamins A, D, E and K. Fats, like fiber, help us to feel full longer as well because they take longer to leave your stomach after eating them.

Taking about a tablespoon of one of the good fats a day is sufficient. This can be some slices of low-fat cheddar cheese incorporated into your meals; olive oil drizzled over your spinach salad, olives included in your whole wheat pasta dish or a salmon steak for dinner.

For a hard-training gal, fat becomes a secondary energy source, next to carbohydrates. When all of the energy stored in your muscles from carbs is used up in a training session, then the body turns to fat for its energy source.

Losing the pounds

No one really wants the extra pounds...can you imagine carrying around a five-pound pair of dumbbells? Not really heavy...at first. Unless you carried them around all day!

That is what our extra and unnecessary weight is...like carrying around bags of groceries or dumbbells - without setting them down!

The healthiest and most long-term way to lose weight is to first incorporate an exercise into your life that you enjoy...that’s why lots of gals can stick with pole dancing as a fitness venue because it is FUN!
When you get to group with others, have a great time, learn new things, get challenged and look awesome while exercising (as well as feel sexier and more confident?) then you are most likely going to stick with it.

I liked the endorphin rush I get while running and I love to watch my muscles flex in the mirror while lifting weights… so we all get different benefits from our choices. Just find a physical activity (or several!) that interests you.

Also, start incorporating good nutrition into your every day diet. Following this diet plan is an easy and great way to start.

Get your body analyzed…no, not the shape, your lean mass to fat ratio or Body Mass Index. You can have your body percent figured at a local gym, or with skin calipers. This will let you know where you are starting and where you want to end up. You want to lose FAT not your valuable muscle. Your muscles are what give you strength, shape and act as a fat-burning powerhouse for you.

Another weight-loss technique that works fast is to start building muscle. Incorporate a strength or weight-training regimen into your exercise schedule. If you pole dance, training with weights will enhance your performance as well as your physique.

**Your Cupboards and Fridge**

Here is a general food list of what to have on hand and what to trash!

**Proteins:**

- Whey protein powder
- Chicken breasts
- Ground turkey
- Salmon steaks
- Tuna - fresh and canned
- Tofu
- Lean beef
- Lean ham
- Shrimp
- Egg whites
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Veggie burgers
Carbohydrates:

- Sweet potato
- Potato
- Squash
- Steamed brown rice
- Lentils
- Whole wheat pasta
- Oatmeal
- Beans, kidney and black
- Fat free milk
- Fat free yogurt
- Whole grain pita bread
- High fiber cereal

Vegetables:

- Broccoli
- Asparagus
- Spinach
- Tomato
- Carrots
- Green beans
- Mushrooms
- Peas
- Artichokes
- Zucchini
- Cucumbers
- Onion
- Brussels sprouts
- Cauliflower

Good fats:

- Avocado
- Raw sunflower seeds
- Natural peanut butter
- Low fat cheese
- Olives
- Olive oil
- Canola oil
- Sunflower oil
Foods to BEWARE!:

- White flower products such as cakes, cookies, white bread, donuts
- Sugary products such as candies, sodas and white sugar
- High salt products such as chips, beef jerky and table salt. Use Mrs. Dash instead!
- High fat foods like French fries or any deep fried foods
- Use all of these junk foods for your cheat meals or cheat days.

Top Fat-Burning Tips

Here is a list of the top fat-burning tips that you can incorporate into your lifestyle.

- Do your cardio first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. You can also drink a cup of black coffee or take caffeine in the form of a natural green-tea tablet ½ before your workout. Caffeine is known to help your body access fat stores for energy.
- Use lemon, lime and orange slices in your water. Citrus has metabolism-raising and fat-burning qualities!
- Incorporate muscle-building/weight-lifting exercises into your routine. More muscle = more calorie-burning!
- Make your cardio workouts shorter, harder, more intense and with intervals. The calorie-burning effect stays going for hours after your workout is done.
- Get enough sleep. 7-9 hours will ensure that there is no sleep-deprivation. Sleep deprivation can increase the hunger hormone and decrease the ‘feeling-full’ hormone
- Keep a training and eating journal. Note your meals, times, cardio, pole workouts, weight training reps and how you feel. This valuable information will help you to plan future workouts as well as know what is working and what is not!
A Final Word...

I hope that I have provided you with easy-to-understand and use information.

My goal is to provide you, the pole dancer (aspiring or veteran!) a place to start learning about the value of good nutrition and its place in your training and performance.

If you have any questions or feedback, you can contact me at sara@learn-pole-dancing.com.

Also, visit my website for all things related to pole dancing! I welcome all feedback!

Happy pole dancing (and good eating!) to you!

Sara