

# Yoga & Raw Food for Weight Management (Q&A)

This report contains answers to unanswered questions from the YOGABODY raw food live tele-class. To listen to the entire tele-class (replay), please [LISTEN HERE](#)

## Caloric Needs & Raw Food?



**Q:** "Since most raw foods are low in calories (aside from oils and nuts), does a raw foodist have to eat constantly in order to reach their calorie needs?"

– *Question by Barbara (New York)*

**LUCAS:** For some people, yes, that can be true. When you start to eat naturally, you start to behave naturally. Grazing animals, for example, eat all day long. For this reason, 100% raw foods can be very challenging for some and perhaps a 50-80% raw food diet makes more sense. For others, we might call "slow oxidizers," they can eat 3-5 raw food meals a day and get plenty of calories. It's an individual thing.

## Sweet Food Substitutes

**Q:** "What is, in your opinion, the most effective method (particular food) for substituting processed sweets?" – *Question by Milan (Belgrade)*

**LUCAS:** Some raw foodists teach that "as long as it's raw, you can eat all you want." I think this is a huge mistake. Raw honey, raw maple syrup or agave... these sweeteners will screw up your blood sugar levels just as quickly as white sugar. In general, with sweet foods, you want to try to eat those with loads of fiber in their whole food form. Honey is processed. Agave is processed. So is maple syrup.



Honey has no fiber. A raw apple has tons. Fiber slows down sugar absorption and is vital to a healthy metabolism. The big challenge here is not so much substituting sweeteners, but quitting. And yes, you do need to quit first,

then start over with new taste buds to "reset" your insulin sensitivity. Many of us are addicted to sweets, and you have to reprogram your body to once again taste the TRUE sweetness of things like bananas, carrots, and papayas. If you skip sweets all together for 21 days, it can be quite an effective "reset."

## Why Not Cook Greens?

**Q:** "Hoping to hear WHY raw [greens are better than] cooked. What is wrong with cooking my greens?"

– *Question by William (Austin)*



**LUCAS:** The truth here is that our knowledge about food nutrients is really very basic. Scientists have isolated the macro nutrients and a good number of micro nutrients in food, but how everything works together remains to be fully revealed.

With that in mind, natural food, raw food, is just a safer bet. There are less variables. Nature's packaging is still intact. That means enzymes are active, phyto-nutrients are in their "living form," and the water content is close to how it was when the plant left the ground.

That said, minimally cooked vegetables are still an incredibly healthy option, and also allow you to eat much higher quantities and digest more plant food calories. For busy people, this is important. For underweight people, this is crucial. If you eat spinach raw, for example, you'll probably only get through 150 grams per day. Lightly steamed, you can chomp down on 300-500 grams no problem.

For most people, eating MORE plants means eating less breads, white rice, and pasta—effortlessly—and this can make a huge difference in your health. So if you've got things to do and a busy life, it's nice not HAVE to eat all day, and still be able to eat healthfully. So don't freak out about lightly steaming foods—particularly if that means you'll actually eat more of them.



## Raw Food & Flexibility

**Q:** "What is the percentage of Raw Food one should eat in one's diet so as to take one's flexibility to the next level?" – *Question by Saurabh (India)*

**LUCAS:** If you eat at least 50% raw, you'll notice a huge difference. To eat 50% raw (we're talking caloric totals here), that means maybe 1 cooked meal and the rest raw foods all day. Socially, this is easier than trying to go full-on as well.

## Sprouts & Nuts

**Q:** "Can you tell me something about sprouts? Also, is it better to eat nuts soaked, rather than in crisp state?"

– *Question by Shanthi (Providence)*



**LUCAS:** Sprouts are amazing. They are baby plants feeding off the seeds. Seeds are good for you, sprouts are better because their nutrients have become "activated." Vitamin and mineral content is at its peak (in almost all cases) during these early days of plants' lives.

If sprouts give you gas, try juicing them. Commercially bought alfalfa sprouts are usually covered in a mold (may not be visible) and should be avoided. Grow them yourself (super easy).

Soaking nuts is very important, particularly for the nuts higher in protein (almonds, walnuts, etc). It makes them easier to digest and cleans away some unwanted chemicals (tannins, for example in almonds). With fatty nuts like macadamia and cashews (not a nut actually), you can skip the soaking if you like.

**NOTE:** If you're planning to eat your nuts/seeds whole (as opposed to blending), after you soak them, just put them on a paper towel and allow them to dry. They will dry on their own nicely again, even with a little crispness if you leave them in the sun.

## Pasta Addiction?

**Q:** "I used to put grilled chicken in salad and have found that nut pates replaced that craving for chicken or fish. Any ideas for a raw food alternative for pasta (an addiction)." – *Question by Deborah (NYC)*

**LUCAS:** Pasta is not an amazing food, nutritionally speaking. In terms of alternatives, if you're doing wheat pasta, switch to brown rice noodles or

kombu (seaweed) noodles. Kombu can be used in its whole food form as a pasta replacement too, but that's usually an acquired taste (slightly fishy). You can make raw vegan pasta with zucchini. It's pretty good, but I'm not going to lie and tell you it tastes like a bowl of Spaghetti-O's.

## Cilantro Too Strong

**Q:** "What can you do to tone down the heavy taste of cilantro in green juices. I realize that Cilantro is great for removing heavy metals and [I] would like to continue adding this to my juice regimen."

– *Question by Genia*

**LUCAS:** Cilantro is an extremely powerful plant, available in almost every country. For some reason, there are many people who can't stand the taste. Personally, I can't get enough and can eat it raw no problem. In juice, it's going to be super potent. No way around that. Lemon will help, but not much. You might try a high quality cilantro extract instead from a health food store.



NOTE: if you're wondering, "What the heck is cilantro?" they might call it coriander where you live. Same thing.

## Cleansing & Bowel Movements

**Q:** "Would you suggest juicing until your bowel movements are not solid?"  
– *Question by Marie (Minneapolis)*

**LUCAS:** Your body is designed to have bowel movements naturally, daily. With the exception of a water fast (not recommended), almost all cleanses involve the intake of *something*.

If we're talking about a juice cleanse, that juice distills down into solid matter, and while it might not seem like much, when you're doing 1.5+ liters of juice per day, the pulp fiber in liquid juices is substantial. And remember that all your body's healthy cells create waste. So even if you're on a purely liquid diet, you can and should continue to have bowel movements (though smaller).



## Is Raw Food Dangerous?

**Q:** "I once read that eating raw broccoli, kale and spinach is bad for your thyroid. Is that true? I also read that steaming vegetables makes them easier to digest—how does this fit in with a raw food diet?"

– *Question by Marnie Neve (Amsterdam)*

**LUCAS:** Cooking vegetables makes them easier to digest in the sense that they are metabolized and/or eliminated faster. Now in terms of the actual uptake of those nutrients? That's another question all together. So yes, cooked foods digest "faster" but not necessarily "better." For some things though, it's just not smart to eat them raw. Legumes for example should be eaten cooked or just left out. I can eat broccoli raw, and I like it, but most people suffer. Don't freak out. Just steam it if you don't like it raw.

Thyroid info is very controversial and I hesitate to make a comment about it as I'm not an expert on that. I would check with your health care provider.

## Protein & Raw Food

**Q:** "How do I make sure that I get the right amount of protein in my diet?"

– *Question by Bonnie (Kingston)*

**LUCAS:** This is the #1 question about raw food and any plant-based diet, and ironically, it's the least important UNLESS you're an athlete, hardcore yoga student, or generally struggle with lean muscle.



Protein is all over the place, and as long as you're eating a well-balanced diet (variety of foods, minimal grains, etc), you'll usually have no problem getting about 10% of your calories from protein. 10% of total calories is about 200 calories for most people, or about 50 grams of protein.

The problem comes when you're traveling, eating out a lot, or if you're a carb junkie (eat bread, pasta or rice every meal). Plant-based protein then becomes more difficult to find, so I recommend taking [YOGA PROTEIN](#) to balance you out.

Also, if you are working to build strength and/or endurance in anything physical (handstands, runners, arm balances, body weight training), 10% protein might not be enough. It's not that you're deficient, but you might really struggle to build strength (no aminos = no bricks for building), and

you might want to multiply your protein intake to see if it helps (often does).

For me personally, a supplemental 15-25 grams of protein per day has made a MASSIVE different in my strength, particularly in my arms. I resisted for years, but when I finally started using sprouted brown rice protein, I was blown away by the difference—for me, anyway.

I use [YOGA PROTEIN](#).

## Cold Weather & Superfoods

**Q:** "My boyfriend lives in Washington DC, where it's very cold right now and he's feeling very weak these days. Is there any superfood he could take to feel awake without [causing] harm to his body?"

– *Question by Luz (Miami)*

**LUCAS:** Body temperature is related to body type and metabolism much more than whether your food is hot or cold. That said, eating certain foods at specific times, can turn up your internal thermometer. Eating lighter meals 7+ times daily, for example, will raise your metabolism quickly. For some people, hot food is a comfort. If that's you, that's fine! Just make some vegetable soup or something simple and minimally processed. No need to go to extremes.

## Carb Cravings

**Q:** "It seems as if I'm always being plagued by cravings for carbs and fried foods. Help?" – *Question by Darren (Nashville)*

**LUCAS:** Our bodies are so incredibly adaptable, and your body will do it's best to deal with whatever you put in your mouth, even if it's mostly sugar.

Some people are genetically blessed (or extremely active) and can carb-out all day long and feel great ([you gotta watch this video](#)); but for most of us, long term carb binges lead to screwed up blood sugar levels, fatty livers, excess belly fat, and potentially debilitating diseases (read: diabetes and heart disease).

A 21-day sugar-free fast is very helpful. Eat greens like a rabbit.

## Hemp Protein

**Q:** "Is hemp protein a better alternative to soy and whey protein. Does it really have all the components we need? One friend says it fools the body because it does not have a complete protein." – *Question by Shirley (Japan)*

**LUCAS:** I love hempseeds as a food, but I'm not a huge fan of hemp protein because I find it difficult to digest (read: gas), but some people love it. Whey protein might work for you if you're OK with dairy and can find a good organic source that's processed without chemicals (I've never seen one, most whey proteins are junk).

Personally, I prefer brown rice protein. It needs to be sprouted first, but it's hypo-allergenic, water processed, and digests very easily for most people with a full spectrum of essential aminos. [YOGA PROTEIN](#)

The whole idea of a "complete protein" originated from a best-selling book published in 1971 called, *Diet for a Small Planet*. The author, Frances Moore Lappé's, wrote that vegetarians needed to combine things like beans and rice to make a "complete protein" since each of those plant foods together creates all 9 essential amino acids.

Logically, this food combining theory makes sense so it became common knowledge in pop health circles and survives to this day even though the author herself (and a gazillion scientists) made a public statement admitting that there was NO scientific data behind her complete protein theory at all. She basically made it up.

So here is the takeaway from all this: you MUST eat all 9 essential amino acids—yes!—but you don't have to eat them all at once, on the same plate. Anyone eating a balanced diet (meaning you're NOT eating pizza 3 meals a day) will usually have no problems with protein at all.

It is certainly true that animal foods provide complete proteins even if you eat just one type of animal. But plants provide all the essential amino acids too assuming you eat a diverse diet and not just French fries.

Conclusion? There is no scientific reason to think of animal protein as superior to plant protein unless you very limited in your food choices or have impaired digestion.

## Raw Food in a Cold Country?

Q: "I think raw food in tropical countries would not be difficult to follow, but what about Japan, or other cold countries in winter time?"

– *Question by Kristin (Italy)*

**LUCAS:** some people are very sensitive to cold, and in cold weather, the idea of eating cold foods seems awful to them. Plenty of other people don't mind at all (I see people eating ice cream in the middle of winter all the time, for example). More than the seasons, the real challenge is the availability of high quality produce.

In many countries, it's not safe or possible to eat purely raw foods unless you're living on a farm. There simply is not enough high quality produce available so you have to rely on some grains (wheat, rice) to survive. Places where I've experienced this include China, Indonesian islands, and India.

## Does Raw Food Change You?

Q: "I was raw for 3 months and had to stop because I felt my personality changing. Friends said I wasn't the same. I had lost my sense of humor and I was "up in the clouds." I was extremely mellow (almost like I was drugged) and I have to say... I became a little boring. Was I lacking something in my raw diet? I find this hard to imagine since I was working at a raw restaurant and every meal contained all types of nutrient rich superfoods. Any ideas on what the problem might have been?"

– *Question by Baird (Carthage)*

**LUCAS:** everything in the world has a vibration. The same way you can "get a bad vibe" from someone sitting next to you on a plane, you can also eat foods with a bad vibe—or no vibe, as is often the case. High vibration foods, living foods, will certainly affect you.

I've never heard of someone becoming boring (most raw foodists I know are slightly wacko/crazy, to be perfectly honest), but it could be something personal you were going through. The "spaced out" feeling you were referring to is often the result of too many sweet foods like fruits, dried fruits and raw sweeteners—or more recently, raw cacao (not something to be eaten with total disregard).

## Is Fruit or Fructose Bad?



**Q:** "A while ago I went on a weight loss program under the guidance of a dietician. She told me that my daily intake of 6-10 pieces of fruit plus 1 or 2 fruit smoothies was not as healthy as I thought and, in fact, my (fruit) sugar intake was the equivalent of 2 liter bottles of coca cola!! I always thought 'well, fruit is healthy so more fruit is even healthier.' So, is fructose healthier than processed sugar? Or is 'too much' fructose just as unhealthy? What is a healthy amount of fruit per day?"  
– *Question by Jack (Mexico)*

**LUCAS:** 10 pieces of fruit may or may not be a lot, depending on the fruit, the climate, and the person. If you're eating 10 bananas, that's a lot of sugar. If you're eating 10 plums, less so. If you're in Ireland, that's one thing, in Thailand another.

Logical reasoning is often used in nutrition, and it's sometimes a big mistake. To measure the sugar in 2 liters of Coke and compare that to 10 oranges is not good science. They are not the same. That said, let's look at what we do know. Fructose as an isolated sweetener (extracted, processed) is NOT healthy and NOT something you should eat at all.

Sugar is better choice than pure fructose (fructose is highly processed and is found in most packaged foods, almost always, corn-derived).

But... and it's a big BUT, the fructose in fruit is not the same as the fructose in a Mountain Dew. Fructose in fruit comes loaded with enzymes, fiber, phyto-nutrients, and all sorts of other goodies that completely change the way that fructose is absorbed into the body. Is it still metabolized by the liver? Yes. But do you find people who are obese from eating too many bananas? Or with diabetes from too much watermelon? Never. From Coke? Millions.

This is a difficult question, but the simple answer is that vegetables, for most people, should be the focus. Eat them like crazy. Fruits are awesome, but for most people, to try to live off them is a mistake.

## Gain Weight On Raw Food?

**Q:** "I am a health minister at [health resort] and have done 85/15 raw vs. cooked food for about 8 yrs. During that time my weight would drop below

140 lbs. I felt good but looked very thin. I had a difficult time putting weight on. For the last 7 yrs I have been eating 50/50 raw vs. cooked. I weigh 150 lbs now and still struggle to keep weight on but eating a lot more cooked foods such as breads, pasta, etc. My question is this: How do you maintain your weight eating raw foods only?" – *Question by G. (Minneapolis)*

**LUCAS:** Gaining weight (or not losing too much) is important for "fast oxidizers" or people who metabolize food very quickly. There are a number of different approaches. For starters, I would make sure you eat something high in fat and protein first thing in the day, something that goes down quickly so that psychologically, it doesn't register as a meal.

Personally, I eat [YOGA SEEDS](#) each morning, take approx. 1 Tbls. of coconut oil during meals, and eat around 15 grams of [YOGA PROTEIN](#) daily. Then I just eat naturally. I was under 140 lbs for a long time. Now, I can carry 155-160 lbs pretty easily (good for me). Sweet, starchy fruits like papaya and banana will help you gain weight quickly too, but it's often just body fat. The same is true for simple grains.

## Raw Food & Belly Fat?

**Q:** "Will a raw food diet help get rid of the fat that has accumulated around my abdomen (I am a 58 yr old woman)?" – *Question by Rebecca (Phoenix)*

**LUCAS:** Belly fat is often linked with insulin resistance caused by over-eating sweet foods for a long time. This might be the story, but is probably an oversimplification. Some people just carry belly fat naturally, and while you might not love it, it might just be where your body stores it.

## What Do You Eat, Lucas?

**Q:** "Please give an example of what your daily "diet" looks like; i.e. from the time you wake up, until the time you go to bed; what do you eat, how much, and when. Just a quick run through would be great, since we all have different schedules and different demands throughout our day. Thanks!!" – *Question by Grażyna (Poland)*

**LUCAS:** This is a tricky question because I move through phases very quickly, usually about every 3 months, I'll completely change my "core foods." I am a firm believer in the body's ability to "crave" what you need (provided you're eating whole food only), so I usually go with that.

It also depends where I am in the world. From 2002-2008, for example, I

ate at least 5 pineapples per week. Recently, I don't eat them at all. There are days I eat nothing but raw food, others where I eat 80% cooked foods. I never eat animal products. I eat almost purely fresh produce.

More than anything, it's about finding what works for you and your lifestyle. But I know... you want specifics. Ok, I'll tell you what I'm doing now.

I wake up very early and don't eat anything until after practice, mid-morning. My first meal is usually around 10 a.m., and from 10 a.m.– 2 p.m., I eat tons of food. I never eat the typical breakfast foods of any kinds, and for many months now, I eat giant heaps of greens (300+ grams). Spinach and various forms of chard are my recent favorites often eaten with lemon, quinoa or amaranth.

I eat almonds throughout the day, soaked, then air dried... probably 1 kilo per week. I eat at least 3 pieces of some fruit daily. Some days, maybe 5-7 pieces depending on what's in season.

I go to the fresh market 3x weekly and each trip take home somewhere around 15 kilos of food for the family (there are 3 of us). So we're going through about 40-50 kilos of produce weekly. It's difficult for me to talk about what I eat because it's just piles of vegetables really with some nuts and seeds (quinoa, amaranth) and a bit of bread here and there from an organic baker down the street (I do fine with gluten).

Where I live, the markets don't have everything—they mostly just have what's in season. When it's artichokes, we eat them like crazy. When the avocados come, we eat those. I'd say I eat about 70-80% of the edible plant foods on offer in any given week. I probably eat legumes 4 days a week too. I like white beans, lentils and chickpeas. I eat some soy, but never soy milk (doesn't agree with me and I don't like the processing). I probably eat a couple hundred grams of tofu or tempeh weekly—always organic, non-GMO local stuff that's good.

For fats, I currently use only two oils: cold-pressed coconut oil from the Philippines and cold-pressed olive oil from Spain. The rest of my fats are eaten in whole food form from nuts, seeds, avocados, and I also take [YOGA SEEDS](#) daily, usually mid-morning for my Omega-3's. At 3 p.m. or so, I usually do 15 grams of [YOGA PROTEIN](#).

## Enzymes & Raw Food?

**Q:** "I get almost all my energy from whole unprocessed plants, raw and cooked. One of the main things I hear about raw is not killing the enzymes that aid in digestion, but I also hear that the enzymes in plants are for the plants, and that our bodies create the enzymes we need for digestion. What's your take." – *Question by Sheri*

**LUCAS:** Enzyme research is pretty lousy (to be perfectly honest). Many people in the raw food community believe enzymes are the secret key to the power of raw foods, but personally, I think it's a big "maybe."



For sure, enzymes play a role, but exactly how and what they do is still largely a mystery. Rather than put so much emphasis on enzymes, I think it's more valuable to put your laser focus on whole foods—foods that come from the ground and haven't been messed with.

A "raw" energy bar that was packaged using low heat 2 years ago, for example, is a piss-poor choice compared with a plate of broccoli lightly steamed 3 minutes ago (active enzymes or not).

Do enzymes play a role in digestion and nutrition? Absolutely. But are there dozens of other things at play that might be just as important? Almost certainly. If it tastes good and makes you feel good raw, don't cook it. If it's old and doesn't rot, don't eat it. Fresh is best... let's move our diets away from products and towards produce.

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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *this Q&A session contains the ideas and opinions of Lucas Rockwood that may/may not be in alignment with those of Angela Stokes-Monarch. This is intended for research only and should not be mistaken for medical advice. With any new diet, it's always best practice to check with your health care practitioner, listen to your body, and decide for yourself what works. Everyone's body is different and I don't know everything.*

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## WANT TO LEARN MORE?



**Q:** "Where can I learn more about using raw food for weight loss?"

**LUCAS:** The best program I know of is Angela Stokes-Monarch's "Live Lightly" program. I'm a member, I've used her stuff, and it's excellent. Plus she's got support and reminders, recipes and videos that make it so easy. If you're serious about losing weight with raw food, visit Angela's site now. [Learn More About Raw Food Now!](#)

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