



SKIP THE SATURDAY NIGHT SABOTAGE

Hazard #1 Boozy occasions

Yep. "Alcohol is such a huge problem in people's weekends – think binge drinking," says Catherine Saxelby, head of Foodwatch Nutrition Centre in Sydney.

Avoid it If you're not prepared to follow that boring add-soda-water-to-wine or drink-light-beer advice, delay your first drink for as long as possible. "The sooner you start drinking, the more you inevitably end up having," says Sharon Natoli, director of Food & Nutrition Australia. "Start with a non-alcoholic drink when you arrive at a function and sip slowly – then order an alcoholic drink. You'll feel better positioned to pace yourself." If you have the foresight to see that alcohol will blow out your kilojoule intake, offer to be the designated driver, suggests Amanda

Clark, dietitian at Great Ideas in Nutrition on the Gold Coast. "Not only will you save kilojoules from not drinking alcohol, but you'll feel better in the morning and be more able to make good food choices." Plus, all your mates will love you for it.

Hazard #2 "Treating" yourself

Who doesn't feel like indulging after a week at work? And food tends to be what most of us like to treat ourselves with.

Avoid it "Choose a real treat, like a massage, facial or time out with a good book – the types of things that you'll be able to look back on and feel pleased about," says Clark. If you do go the food route, choose portion-controlled options – Clark suggests a single scoop of gelato or a mini cupcake. "And make sure when



you choose a treat, that it's the right time and place for maximum enjoyment – an ice-cream is best eaten in the park or by the sea on a warm day; not dripping down your arm while you juggle it and the groceries on your way to the car." We couldn't agree more!

Hazard #3 Skipping meals

Not planning your weekend around food can also be a trap. "If you sleep in, then eat a light breakfast, go shopping and do the usual Saturday/Sunday runaround, it can be easy to forget to eat lunch," says Natoli. "This results in feeling starving by dinner and overdosing in the evening."

Avoid it "Plan to stop and eat lunch; if you're on the run, grab sushi or a salad wrap, or at least take snacks like dried

fruit and nuts and wholegrain crackers with you," says Natoli. If you feel starving before a night out, have a light snack to curb your evening intake to avoid overdosing on tempura.

Hazard #4 Feeling guilty

That "treating yourself" thing can lead to remorse. And then a, "What the hell, I'll get back on the wagon on Monday" attitude. "A common weekend mistake is the thought that, because you've eaten differently or more than usual, all your good efforts during the week have been ruined and you may as well eat yourself silly," says Natoli.

Avoid it "If you eat or drink more than you planned, get back on track from the next mouthful – not the next week," says Natoli. "This way you'll minimise damage."

Hazard #5 Having a boring fridge

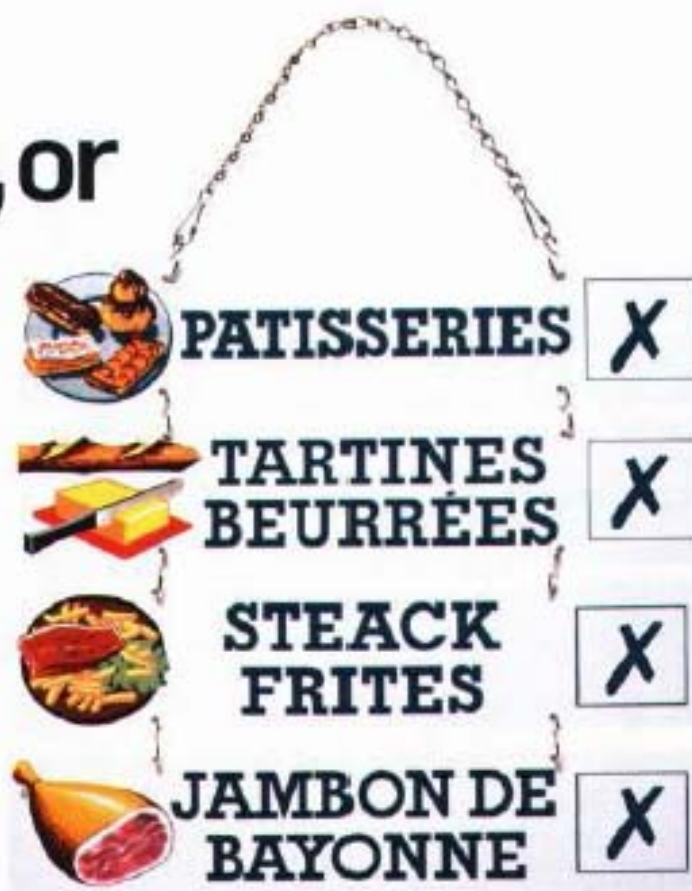
We tend to make sure we have food for packed lunches and home-cooked dinners during the week, but get slack about planning for homemade meals for the weekend. "By the time the weekend rolls around, the fridge tends to be pretty bare, leading us to eat out whether we planned to or not," says Clark.

Avoid it "Head out to a Saturday morning farmers' market and stock up on fresh foods to inspire you to cook over the weekend," suggests Clark. Then make the most of the extra time you have to prep that Bill Granger recipe you'd never have time to make on a Monday night. **wh**

Dukan, or don't?

We scope out the eating plan that's wowing France

We knew it all along: French women do get fat. A study led by research company TNS Sofres found the average French person has gained 3.1kg and 4.7cm around the waist over the past 12 years. But French nutritionist Dr Pierre Dukan thinks he has a solution, and 1.5 million are said to be following it: a new protein-centric diet. The Dukan Diet looks set to be the next eating craze to hit our shores, so we asked experts to rate it.



How does it work?

The diet consists of four stages:
Stage 1 For the first two to 10 days (depending on how much you want to lose), you can eat as much as you want from a list of 72 lean protein-rich foods. The difference between this and Atkins is that you can only eat lean protein – you're not even allowed a few salad leaves.
Stage 2 You stay in this stage until you hit your target weight. Every second day you can serve up your protein with as many of the 28 "accepted" vegetables as you like.
Stage 3 You stay in this stage for five days for every half kilo you lost in the first two stages. No more alternating, and you re-introduce foods, with restrictions, eg you can only eat one serve of fruit and cheese per day and two serves of starchy foods per week. You can also have two go-all-out meals a week. But you must have one protein-only day a week. Is it just us, or do the words "complicated" and "fad" come to mind?
Stage 4 For the rest of your days, eat pretty much what you like – as long as you stick with one protein-only day.

Experts' opinions

✓ **Rapid weight loss goals** "You can calculate your target weight at dukandiet.co.uk, and the target weight loss fits into a normal BMI. Also it advises you if your perceived target weight is too severe," says WHI nutrition expert Kristen Beck, director of Beck Health & Nutrition in Sydney.
 ✓ **It cuts your intake of crap** "The only positive outcome of these types of fad programs is if your regular diet is poor to begin with – so a reduction of saturated fat and sugar will be beneficial," says Jo-Anne Dembo, principal dietitian at Diet By O'Zyme in Perth.
 ✗ **It'll decrease your muscle mass** "The start phase is carb depletion – by choosing protein only you're depleting your muscles and liver of glycogen, which lets you drop 1 to 2kg of weight and move into a fat-burning state. The issue is you'll also be losing muscle mass, resulting in a drop in metabolic rate," says Sydney-based dietitian Susie Burrell.
 ✗ **It limits nutrients** "You'll miss out on important nutrients and a lot of dietary fibre, so it's likely you'll

feel sluggish," says Beck. "On blogs, many Dukan Dieters describe feeling weak and tired – also because of lack of carbs – which doesn't fuel exercise." Amanda Clark, dietician at Great Ideas in Nutrition on the Gold Coast, agrees: "If you have a lot of weight to lose, you'll go without fruit, starchy vegetables, breads and cereals for months in stage two – this is risky. I'd like to see some long-term studies on cancer risk – particularly bowel cancer."
 ✗ **The strict guidelines** "[It would be] hard to sustain," says Burrell.
 ✗ **The lack of evidence** Clark says: "I've found no published scientific papers on Pierre Dukan's diet. I think the complicated regimens are designed to persuade us that Dr Dukan knows rules that must be followed... Handy when applying blame for failures – if you didn't follow the rules, it's your failure, not the diet's. A textbook fad diet."

EAT FOR THE BODY

Elle Macpherson's trainer James Duigan, author of new book *The Clean & Lean Diet* (\$27.99, Simon & Schuster), shares his tips:

Use cinnamon instead of sugar

"Sprinkle some on your latte or yoghurt and fruit," says Duigan. According to *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* research, cinnamon helps blood sugar travel more efficiently to cells where it's required.



Start with Bircher

Packed full of nutrients, Duigan's recipe: soak 1/2 cup oats, 1 handful chopped Brazil nuts, 1 handful almonds and 1 tbs seeds (pumpkin, sesame or sunflower) in 3/4 cup rice milk overnight. Yum.



Mix up your meals

"Variety is key," Duigan says. "Not only is it boring eating the same foods every day, it's also unhealthy. Each type of food contains different nutrients and varying levels of these nutrients."



40 ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF AUSSIE WOMEN ON A DIET AT ANY ONE TIME
 SOURCE: DIETITIAN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA