

## FIGHTING THE FINAL FIVE HOW TO SHED THOSE LAST POUNDS & REACH YOUR GOAL

By Owen Rothstein



It feels like you've been at it forever. You've done all the right things; changed your diet, your portions, your protein/carb ratios, your meal frequency, your timing, your workouts...everything that your doctor/trainer/health coach told you to do, but you just can't seem to get those final few pounds to go away. There are some complicated forces at work here.

The more lean muscle that your body has, as compared to the rest of your body composition, the more your metabolism and basal metabolic rate (the number of calories that your body would burn if you stayed in bed all day) go up. But, for every pound that you lose, your metabolism slows by about 20 calories per day, because it takes less energy to move your body around. At some point a natural balance occurs and your weight loss plateaus. We've talked to a few experts and think that we've found a few minor adjustments that just may get you to your goal.

**1. Get More Sleep** – We wanted to start off with an easy and often overlooked weight loss aid, more sleep. Studies show that lean muscle loss can decrease when lack of sleep increases.

If you're not getting 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night, it can increase your appetite and make it harder to keep vigilant all day. These two factors may be influencing those final pounds.

**2. Stand & Climb** – Cary Grant famously said that he kept in shape by only ever taking the stairs (never elevators). This probably isn't enough to rip the weight off, but it will represent increased activity which should help. This is particularly true if you pair it with standing more on a daily basis. The desk chair is the enemy, so if you get your butt up for 60 additional minutes each day, you can burn about 100 calories and help chisel away at those final pounds. It may even make you more creative.

**3. Walk More** – This one sort of pairs with #2. These are things that we can do all day every day to increase activity and burn more calories. I was at a cocktail party the other evening with a

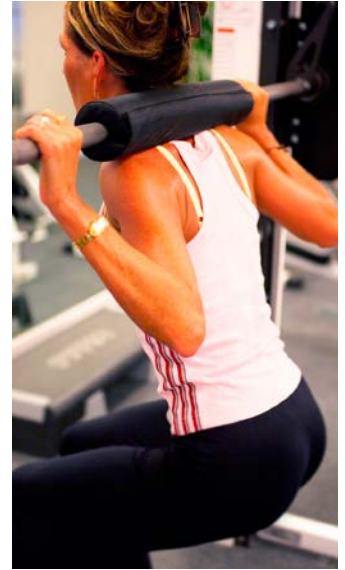
friend and she dashed out early because her Fit Bit told her that she still needed 1500 more steps to hit her daily quota. I'm not sure if I mentioned that she is in fantastic shape. Go for just one more stroll a week, it can make all the difference.

**4. Add Some Weights** – If you are just using cardio when you exercise to burn fat, you may be missing the point. As we've mentioned, a key factor for your metabolism is lean muscle mass. If you add a little lean muscle, your body will burn fat more effectively. This is more of a long term investment than a quick fix, but it will certainly pay off in the end.

**5. Keep a Food Diary** – If you're not already doing this, you'll be surprised how much this can help (maybe as much as doubling weight loss effectiveness). Experts say that approx. 80% of fitness is nutrition and this is where you may be able to fine tune the good habits that you've already embraced. Be accurate, honest, complete and consistent in your journal. When you review your journal, look for patterns or place that you could have eliminated extra or the wrong types of calories without sacrificing satisfaction.

**6. Try Supplementation** – If you're already getting all of your nutrition from natural, whole-foods, then you're doing the right thing. A small tweak that may help you break that plateau could be found in a clean, natural supplement. Protein supplementation or some fat-burning, functional supplements could do the trick for that additional loss. Just make sure to talk to your physician to make sure that this is a good idea for you.

**7. Be Patient** – We're not big fans of the "perfect" weight number, but hey...a goal is a goal. As long as you are eating properly, exercising regularly, taking care of yourself and feeling good, those extra few pounds shouldn't be a huge cause for concern. Keep doing the right thing and you'll get there, so be kind to yourself...you've earned it.



REMEMBER, NUTRITION IS A KEY PART OF ACHIEVING YOUR FITNESS GOALS. YOU HAVE TO FUEL YOUR BODY PROPERLY AND NOT SKIMP ON THE CALORIES IF YOU WANT A HEALTHY, LEAN BODY.