

LAYMAN FAT LOSS BLUEPRINT

A no-nonsense, science-backed guide for busy professionals who want to lose fat, build strength, and keep both — permanently.

PANKAJ NARSIAN, CSCS

Health & Fitness Strategist | Senior Faculty, INFS | 13+ Years Coaching

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 01 Introduction** *Setting the stage for sustainable change*
- 02 Creating the Right Mindset** *The invisible variable that decides everything*
- 03 Optimising the Metabolic System** *Energy balance, hunger, tracking, and plateaus*
- 04 Functional Fitness for Strength and Longevity** *Training with purpose and precision*
- 05 Master the Boring Basics (MTBB)** *The floor you build before the ceiling*
- 06 About the Coach** *Who built this blueprint and why*

CHAPTER 01

Introduction

This blueprint offers a comprehensive and sustainable roadmap designed to help you achieve leanness, boost energy, and enhance functional fitness. It is structured around three critical pillars — three shifts that move you away from temporary quick fixes and toward a permanent lifestyle change.

The Three Pillars

Pillar One: Establishing the right mindset.

Before macros, before training plans, before anything tactical — you need to understand how you think about change. This section outlines how to define your deep emotional 'why,' build self-efficacy through small consistent wins, and develop a bounce-back strategy for the inevitable slip-ups.

Pillar Two: Mastering the fundamentals and optimising your metabolism.

Sleep. Hydration. A consistent calorie deficit. Protein. Fibre. This is the metabolic floor. Once that's solid, you layer in deeper strategies — nutrient timing, insulin sensitivity through resistance training, gut health support, and calorie cycling to prevent metabolic adaptation.

Pillar Three: Functional fitness and long-term maintenance.

Resistance training with compound movements builds the metabolically active muscle mass that holds fat loss in place. Cardiovascular work builds the aerobic engine that makes everything else sustainable. The finish line isn't a number on the scale — it's a new normal you can live in for the rest of your life.



By the end of this blueprint, you will have a clear, actionable plan — not just for losing fat, but for maintaining a healthier, stronger, and more energised life permanently.

CHAPTER 01 · INTRODUCTION

THE BLUEPRINT

Sustainable fat loss isn't a 6-week challenge. It's a system built on three interlocking pillars — and it starts here.

THE THREE PILLARS





 <p>PILLAR 01 MINDSET FIRST</p> <p>Define your deep emotional why. Build self-efficacy through small wins. Develop a bounce-back strategy for inevitable setbacks.</p>	 <p>PILLAR 02 MASTER THE METABOLISM</p> <p>Sleep. Hydration. Calorie deficit. Protein. Fibre. Build the metabolic floor before adding complexity on top.</p>	 <p>PILLAR 03 FUNCTIONAL FITNESS</p> <p>Resistance training builds metabolically active muscle. Cardio builds the aerobic engine. Together they hold fat loss in place permanently.</p>
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✓ **The goal isn't just losing fat — it's building a new normal you can live in for the rest of your life.**

BY THE NUMBERS

13+ Years of coaching experience behind this system	3 Pillars that make fat loss permanent, not temporary	80% Consistency over a year beats 100% for one month	0 Quick fixes, crash diets, or willpower games required
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WHAT THIS BLUEPRINT GIVES YOU

-  **A calorie deficit strategy** — not guesswork, not restriction theatre. Just a system that works.
-  **A 3-day training framework** that works even with a packed calendar and zero gym experience.
-  **A mindset reset** that stops you quitting when life gets messy — because it will.
-  **A maintenance plan** — so you never return to square one again. The end goal is a new normal.

CHAPTER 02

Creating the Right Mindset

The invisible variable that decides everything

The right mindset or thought process plays an important role in deciding the probability of success.

— Pankaj Narsian

Why Mindset Comes First

Before we talk about nutrition, training, or sleep optimisation, we need to address something invisible but absolutely critical: how you think about change itself. Your mindset determines whether you'll actually implement what you learn, whether you'll stick with it when life gets messy, and whether a single setback becomes a permanent derailment or a data point to learn from.

In my coaching conversations over 13+ years, I've noticed a clear pattern. Some people get results that stick. Others don't — not because they lack willpower or genetics, but because they're operating from a fixed mindset. Understanding the difference changes everything.

Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset

The Fixed Mindset

A fixed mindset believes your abilities are locked in place. You're either naturally disciplined or you're not. You either have good genetics or you don't. In this frame, a mistake means you're not cut out for this. A bad week of eating means you've failed. A plateau means the system doesn't work for your body.

The Growth Mindset

A growth mindset believes abilities are built through practice. You're not naturally disciplined — you become disciplined by doing the things daily that you said you'll do. Your genetics set a starting point, not a ceiling. When you slip up, it doesn't mean you've failed — it means your system needs adjustment. When a plateau hits, it's a message from your body that something has to change.

The difference sounds subtle. It's not. It determines whether you interpret struggle as proof you should quit, or as information you should learn from.

The growth mindset shows up in practice like this: before you chase perfect nutrition or aggressive training, spend 6–12 weeks building the floor. You're not optimising. You're proving to yourself that you can do the basics consistently, even when life interferes.

Building the Floor First

The three components are straightforward: Movement, Recovery, and Fuelling Right.

- Consistent sleep — 7+ hours, same sleep and wake time every day
- Basic movement — 6,000 to 8,000 steps daily, or 3x per week resistance and aerobic training
- Honest food logging — no perfect macros yet, just truth

The point isn't to see dramatic results immediately. It's to build the identity of someone who follows through on a plan.

A Real Example

A senior manager from South India — two kids, packed calendar, history of fitness attempts that lasted 4–6 weeks before collapsing. His first instinct was to restructure his schedule, wake up earlier, block time more efficiently. But when we looked at what was actually happening, he was sleeping 5.5 hours most nights, skipping lunch or eating it distracted while staring at emails, and jumping into heavy training sessions with no recovery buffer.

His calendar wasn't the problem. His energy reserves were empty. We didn't touch his training program first. We fixed sleep consistency. Then 3 meals at predictable times. We pulled back training intensity until his recovery caught up. Six weeks later he was training three days a week, had no afternoon crashes, and had steady energy from morning to evening. Not because he found more hours in his day. Because the hours he already had become actually usable.

Your Belief Ceiling vs. Your Actual Capacity

Discipline is built through consistently doing things that matter, until it becomes second nature to you.

A 47-year-old executive came to coaching after years of trying and failing. He told me he was 'just not a disciplined person.' But when we looked at what he'd actually tried, every program had demanded daily workouts at 6 AM plus strict meal prep. For a guy who doesn't wake up early and has a travelling schedule. So yes, it fell apart. Not because he lacked discipline. Because the structure didn't fit his life.

We built something else. Three training sessions, flexible time. Meals that didn't require cooking at 5 AM. Protein spaced across the day instead of loaded at dinner. Fourteen months later, he's down 12 kg, moves better, and genuinely believes he's capable. The capacity was always there. The belief just needed evidence.

The Mindset Shift

So here's what this guide asks you to make: when something doesn't work, it doesn't mean you can't. It means that particular approach doesn't fit you. When you slip up on your diet, it doesn't mean you're weak. It means your system needs adjustment. When a plateau hits, it's not evidence that transformation is impossible. It's a message that something has to change.

Everything that follows — every tactic, every strategy, every specific piece of advice — works best when you approach it with this mindset: curious, patient, willing to be a beginner at something you thought you already understood. That's the real transformation. That's what holds.

CHAPTER 02 · MINDSET


THE MINDSET SHIFT

Your mindset determines whether struggle means quit or learn. Everything else in this blueprint depends on getting this right first.

FIXED MINDSET VS. GROWTH MINDSET



FIXED MINDSET	VS	GROWTH MINDSET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Abilities are locked — you either have it or you don't ⊗ A bad week means you've failed — full stop ⊗ A plateau means the system is broken ⊗ Discipline is something you're born with ⊗ One slip-up derails the whole effort 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Abilities are built through consistent daily practice ⊙ A bad week is data — adjust and continue forward ⊙ A plateau is your body asking for a change ⊙ Discipline is built by doing the daily things you commit to ⊙ One slip-up is one meal — resume at the very next one

BUILD THIS BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE




 <p>STEP 01 DEFINE YOUR DEEP WHY</p> <p>Not "I want to lose weight." The real reason — energy for your kids, confidence at work, 20 more functional years. This is your anchor when motivation dips.</p>	 <p>STEP 02 BUILD SMALL WINS FIRST</p> <p>Spend 6–12 weeks proving you can do the basics consistently. Sleep, steps, honest logging. Build the identity of someone who follows through — before the results arrive.</p>	 <p>STEP 03 THE BOUNCE-BACK RULE</p> <p>A slip-up isn't failure — it's one data point. Resume your plan at the very next meal. Never let one bad meal become two. The comeback is always available.</p>
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"Your limiting belief about yourself is the real bottleneck. Not your genetics. Not your schedule. Not your willpower."
— PANKAJ NARSIAN, CSCS

BELIEF CEILING VS. ACTUAL CAPACITY

 <p>WHAT YOU TELL YOURSELF</p> <p>"I'm just not a disciplined person."</p> <p>Every program demanded 6 AM workouts and strict meal prep. For someone with a traveling schedule. It fell apart — not because of discipline, but because the structure didn't fit the life.</p>	 <p>WHAT'S ACTUALLY TRUE</p> <p>The capacity was always there.</p> <p>3 flexible sessions. Meals without 5 AM cooking. Protein through the day. 14 months later — 12 kg down, moving better, genuinely believes he's capable. The belief just needed evidence.</p>
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THE FLOOR — BUILD THIS IN WEEKS 1-12 BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

 <p>SLEEP 7+ hours. Same sleep and wake time every day. The entire system runs on this.</p>	 <p>MOVEMENT 6,000–8,000 steps daily or 3x weekly resistance and aerobic training.</p>	 <p>HONEST LOGGING No perfect macros yet. Just truth. Awareness before optimisation.</p>
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CHAPTER 03

Optimising the Metabolic System

Energy balance, hunger, tracking, and plateaus

It's important to understand that not all nutritional factors are equally important — some have a much greater impact than others.

— Pankaj Narsian

Understanding Energy Balance

The fundamental law of fat loss — the non-negotiable principle that underpins all successful body transformation — is achieving a Calorie Deficit, also known as a negative energy balance. In simple terms, a calorie deficit means you are consistently consuming fewer calories than your body expends over a period of time.

Your body requires energy for everything — from breathing and maintaining body temperature (Basal Metabolic Rate or BMR), to digesting food (Thermic Effect of Food or TEF), to physical activity (Activity Energy Expenditure or AEE). When the energy you ingest from food and drink is less than the total energy you use, your body is forced to tap into its stored energy reserves — primarily body fat — to make up the difference.

It is a scientific certainty that you cannot lose fat without a calorie deficit. Regardless of the diet plan you follow — low-carb, high-fat, intermittent fasting, or clean eating — if you are not in a calorie deficit, fat loss will not occur.

The Mindset of Hunger Management

The true secret to getting lean isn't just how much you eat — it's in how you frame your relationship with hunger and cravings.

— Pankaj Narsian

Reframing Hunger as Information, Not a Crisis

Most people treat hunger as an immediate emergency that demands immediate cessation. Instead, adopt the mindset that a rumbling stomach is merely a signal — information that your body is operating on a deficit. It means your system is working. Slight to moderate hunger occasionally is evidence you are successfully mobilising fat reserves. Extreme, painful hunger is a problem. Slight hunger is progress.

The 10-Minute Rule

When a craving hits — particularly for non-satiating, high-palatability foods like sweets or chips — don't immediately give in. Tell yourself you can have the food, but only after you complete a non-food action: drink a glass of water, walk a lap, check your email, or prepare a protein-rich alternative. Most cravings are waves that peak and subside. The delay allows the emotional intensity to pass.

Physical Hunger vs. Emotional Hunger

Physical hunger comes on gradually and can be satisfied by any food. Emotional hunger is sudden, urgent, and usually demands a very specific hyper-palatable food. When you feel hunger, pause and ask: where do I feel this? If it's a physical sensation in your stomach, it's real. If it's a mental preoccupation or a feeling of boredom or stress, it's emotional. You cannot solve an emotional problem with food — you need a non-food coping mechanism.

The Identity Shift

Your diet fails when you rely on willpower. It succeeds when you build a new identity. Instead of thinking 'I have to resist the snack,' think 'I am a person who prioritises long-term energy and performance over short-term gratification.' When you make a food decision, it's not just about that meal — it's a vote for the person you want to become.

Tracking and Managing

Measure Raw, Not Cooked

For maximum accuracy, weigh grains and meats raw. Cooked weights vary dramatically based on water absorption or loss. A 100g raw chicken breast becomes 65–70g when cooked. A 100g raw rice becomes 300g when cooked. If you track cooked weights, you'll consistently underestimate calories. Raw weights give you the truth.

Proactive, Not Reactive Logging

Don't log what you just ate. Log what you plan to eat tomorrow. This eliminates decision fatigue. When you log proactively, you know exactly what your day looks like before it starts. You see where you have room for flexibility. You don't end up at 8 PM realising you have 300 calories left with no meal planned.

A working professional came to coaching after six months of 'dieting.' She followed an app-based plan, hit her macros, trained three times a week. Yet her weight fluctuated between 75–77 kg for 16 weeks. When we audited her diet, she was underestimating oil by 150 calories daily and forgetting to count cooking mediums on her vegetables. Her actual intake was 150 calories higher than logged. That's a 10,500-calorie error per week — enough to erase her deficit. We fixed the tracking, tightened the numbers, and in four weeks she dropped 2.5 kg steadily. Same training. Same effort. Different data.

Gut Health — The Second Brain

Recognise the critical link between gut microbiome health and metabolism. Prioritise fermented foods and prebiotic fibre to support a diverse gut environment, which plays a role in nutrient absorption, inflammation, and even mood regulation.

Satiety Index

Foods high in fibre add volume and promote greater satiety than calorically similar liquid options. A bowl of boiled potatoes will keep you fuller much longer than 200 calories of juice. Choosing foods with a high satiety index is essential for adhering to a calorie-controlled plan without constant hunger.

Other effective satiety aids include: diet soda, yogurt, chaas (buttermilk), fresh-lime soda, popcorn, and puffed rice mixes.

Managing Plateaus

When an individual's weight loss stalls, the overwhelming reason is always an elevated overall calorie intake. Timing is secondary to total calories consumed by the end of the day.

While the quality of food matters for health, satiety, and muscle preservation, you can technically gain weight on 'clean' foods if you overconsume them. Conversely, you can lose weight eating mostly 'unhealthy' foods if you restrict total calories sufficiently. For fat loss, total energy content is paramount.



Indian home cooking hides 200–300 calories in cooking oil. Most people don't measure oil. A single tablespoon is roughly 120 calories. When you're on 1,500 calories, three unmeasured tablespoons become the difference between progress and stagnation.

CHAPTER 03 · METABOLIC SYSTEM

OPTIMISE YOUR METABOLISM





Not all nutritional factors are equally important. Some move the needle dramatically. Here's where your energy goes — and how to put it to work.

THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW: ENERGY BALANCE



 CALORIES IN Food & Drink Everything you consume provides energy to the body	<	 CALORIES OUT MUST BE GREATER THAN Calories Out BMR + Thermic Effect of Food + Activity Energy Expenditure
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Scientific certainty: regardless of diet — low-carb, fasting, clean eating — without a calorie deficit, fat loss cannot occur. Any weight lost without a deficit is water or glycogen, not fat.

THE MINDSET OF HUNGER MANAGEMENT

 REFRAME HUNGER HUNGER IS A SIGNAL, NOT A CRISIS A rumbling stomach means your body is successfully mobilising fat reserves. Slight hunger is progress. Extreme hunger is a signal to adjust. Celebrate the difference.	 DELAY THE CRAVING THE 10-MINUTE RULE When a craving hits, perform a non-food action first — drink water, walk a lap, check email. Most cravings are waves that peak and pass. Give your rational brain a chance to choose.
 KNOW THE DIFFERENCE PHYSICAL VS. EMOTIONAL HUNGER Physical hunger is gradual, felt in your stomach, satisfied by any food. Emotional hunger is sudden, urgent, demands something specific. You cannot solve an emotional problem with food.	 SHIFT YOUR IDENTITY EVERY DECISION IS A VOTE Stop "resisting the snack." Think: "I'm someone who prioritises long-term energy over short-term gratification." Each food decision is a vote for the person you're becoming — not just a meal.




TRACK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

 MEASURE RAW, NOT COOKED 100g raw chicken → 65g cooked. 100g raw rice → 300g cooked. Track cooked and you underestimate calories every single day — silently erasing your deficit.	 LOG TOMORROW, NOT TODAY Plan and log what you'll eat tomorrow — not what you just ate. You enter every day with clarity. No end-of-day panic. Decision fatigue disappears completely.
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120 kcal per tablespoon of oil
THE HIDDEN PLATEAU KILLER IN INDIAN COOKING
 Indian home cooking hides 200–300 extra calories in unmeasured oil. Three tablespoons on a 1,500-calorie plan wipes out your entire deficit. Measure oil in millilitres — every single time.

WHY PLATEAUS HAPPEN

 TIMING IS SECONDARY 3 meals or 6, 8 AM or 8 PM. Meal timing is irrelevant if total calories by end of day exceed your target.	 CLEAN FOOD ≠ FREE FOOD You can gain weight on healthy food. You can lose weight eating "junk." Total calorie content is what drives fat loss — quality alone doesn't override quantity.	 WHEN IT STALLS The overwhelming reason is always elevated overall calorie intake. Reassess your tracking accuracy before changing your training, your diet, or anything else.
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C H A P T E R 0 4

Functional Fitness

For strength and longevity

Functional fitness lets you enjoy health and longevity benefits with structured resistance-based strength training and aerobic work.

— Pankaj Narsian

Your Essential Medicine for a Better Life

Resistance and cardiovascular training are potent medicines, offering significant mental and physical health benefits. These include reduced anxiety, improved mood, and building stress resilience. The capability to move heavy weight boosts self-efficacy, translating to better handling of professional and personal stress.

Physically, it builds muscle, improves bone density (combating sarcopenia and osteoporosis), enhances insulin sensitivity (mitigating type 2 diabetes risk), and strengthens connective tissues, reducing chronic pain.

The myth that busy professionals must choose between strength and capability is false. True fitness requires both. If you're winded by a flight of stairs, your strength is isolated. Aerobic capacity is the engine for recovery, sustained work energy, and quality of life.

Functional Fitness (Pattern-Based) Resistance Training

Functional Fitness (pattern-based) training focuses on resistance training on fundamental human movements rather than individual muscles. Think about how you move in daily life: you squat to sit, you hinge to pick things up, you push things away, and you pull things closer. Your program should prioritise these patterns:

- Squat — sit, stand, climb
- Hinge — pick things up, load the posterior chain
- Push — horizontal (bench) and vertical (overhead)
- Pull — horizontal (row) and vertical (lat pulldown / pull-up)

This approach ensures balanced development, reduces the risk of injury, and builds real-world applicable strength. Structure your workouts around these four core movements and you'll hit all key areas efficiently without complicated splits.

Sample Functional Fitness Workout

This simple, pattern-based program focuses on the four core movements (Squat, Hinge, Push, Pull) and incorporates functional core work. It is designed for maximum efficiency and adherence, requiring only three sessions per week.

Exercise Pattern	Monday (Full Body)	Sets × Reps × Rest
Warm-Up	Hip / Ankle Mobility Drills	N/A
Squat	Goblet Squat	2 × 10–12 × 90s
Hinge	Romanian Deadlift (RDL)	2 × 10–12 × 90s
Push (Horizontal)	Dumbbell Bench Press	2 × 8–10 × 90s
Pull (Vertical)	Lat Pulldown / Pull-up (Modified)	2 × 8–10 × 90s
Core (Anti-Rotation)	Plank or Side Plank	2 × 30–60s hold/side
Conditioning	25 min Zone 1–2 Cardio (Bike/Row)	1 round

Building the Aerobic Floor, Before the Ceiling

Low-Intensity Work (Zone 1–2) — The Foundation

A low-to-moderate pace where you can comfortably hold a conversation or breathe exclusively through your nose. This is not a hard sprint or a challenging jog — it is sustainable effort that builds your aerobic capacity without hindering your strength recovery. Perform 2–4 times per week, 20–40 minutes per session.

High-Intensity Work (Zone 4–5) — Use Sparingly

Intervals are a small but necessary component for certain individuals. They should not exceed 15% of your total cardio time. Overdoing high-intensity work is counterproductive — it often interferes with muscle recovery and leads to burnout. Always space high-intensity sessions to allow for adequate recovery.

Integrating Sport and Training

Treat high-impact sports (football, pickleball) as a high-intensity session. Do not perform heavy leg workouts the day after an intense game. Overuse injuries are typically the result of poor training schedules, not the activities themselves.

Safety Essentials

Warm-Ups Are Non-Negotiable

Spend 5–7 minutes on general warm-up, then move to workout-specific drills before transitioning to lifting. Arm circles. Band pull-apart. Glute activations. Dead bugs. Leg swings. These aren't optional. They prepare your nervous system, activate stabiliser muscles, and set the movement pattern. Skip warm-ups and your pain increases. Include them and pain often disappears without changing your training load.

Mobility Work

Prioritise mobility drills for shoulders, hips, and ankles before heavy lifting. Tight hips force your knees and lower back to compensate. Immobile ankles limit your squat depth unnecessarily. Mobility is 10 minutes before training. But it prevents joint pain that keeps you out of the gym entirely.

Form Over Load

Prioritise light weight with perfect form and full range of motion over heavy ego lifts that cause pain. Good movement protects joints. Poor movement creates defaults that lead to chronic pain. Start light, perfect the movement, then add weight.

Intra-Abdominal Bracing

To safeguard your spine, actively brace your core before every lift, regardless of the weight. Imagine preparing for a punch — this creates essential intra-abdominal pressure. This core bracing is mandatory for all exercises and must be maintained for every single repetition.

RIR — Reps in Reserve

Stop 1–2 reps short of failure. This strategy optimises recovery and allows for higher training frequency and volume without burnout. For busy professionals, RIR is key to consistent progress — favouring frequency over exhaustive individual sessions.

The Barefoot Advantage

For movements like deadlifts, leg presses, or squats, wearing cushioned running shoes causes instability. Try doing these movements barefoot or in flat-soled shoes. The difference in force transfer and stability is immediate. Your knees hurt less. Your lift feels stronger.

Consistency Over Intensity

Consistency at 80% for a full year far outweighs 100% intensity for a single month.

Six weeks of perfect adherence followed by two months of chaos means you cycle through the same starting point every 12 weeks. You're always returning to zero. But consistency at 75–80%, done week after week, compounds. After four weeks, you see it. After eight weeks, it becomes obvious. After 12 weeks, people don't recognise you — not because you did something heroic, but because you did something small, repeatedly.





Start with a routine you can maintain when work gets stressful, when family demands spike, when life gets messy. That routine will feel too easy at first. That's exactly the point. Easy is sustainable. Sustainability is where results live.

CHAPTER 04 · FUNCTIONAL FITNESS



STRENGTH & LONGEVITY

Resistance and cardiovascular training are not optional extras — they are potent medicine. Here's how to use them without wrecking your recovery.

THE FOUR MOVEMENT PATTERNS — TRAIN THESE, NOT MUSCLES

 <p>SQUAT Goblet Squat · Split Squat</p> <p>Sit, stand, climb stairs. The most fundamental movement you do every single day.</p>	 <p>HINGE Romanian Deadlift · Hip Thrust</p> <p>Pick things up safely. Loads the posterior chain — glutes, hamstrings, lower back.</p>	 <p>PUSH DB Bench Press · Overhead Press</p> <p>Horizontal and vertical pushing. Chest, shoulders, triceps developed together.</p>	 <p>PULL Lat Pulldown · DB Row</p> <p>Vertical and horizontal pulling. Back, biceps — balances all your pressing work.</p>
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THE AEROBIC FLOOR — BUILD IT BEFORE THE CEILING

<p>PRIORITY · ZONE 1-2 CARDIO</p>  <p>Low Intensity Is Your Foundation</p> <p>A conversational pace — you can breathe exclusively through your nose. Builds aerobic capacity without hindering strength recovery. 2-4x per week, 20-40 minutes per session. Sustainable, not heroic.</p> <p>85% OF YOUR TOTAL CARDIO TIME</p>	 <p>≤15%</p> <p>HIGH INTENSITY</p> <p>Zone 4-5 intervals. Use sparingly — overdoing it interferes with muscle recovery and leads to burnout.</p>
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SAMPLE 3-DAY FUNCTIONAL WORKOUT

MOVEMENT PATTERN	EXERCISE	VOLUME
Squat	Goblet Squat	2 x 10-12 x 90s
Hinge	Romanian Deadlift	2 x 10-12 x 90s
Push	Dumbbell Bench Press	2 x 8-10 x 90s
Pull	Lat Pulldown / Pull-up	2 x 8-10 x 90s
Core	Plank or Side Plank	2 x 30-60s hold
Conditioning	Zone 1-2 Cardio (Bike / Row)	25 min

SAFETY ESSENTIALS — NON-NEGOTIABLE

 <p>WARM-UP FIRST</p> <p>5-7 min: arm circles, band pull-aparts, glute activations, leg swings. Skip this and pain increases. Do it and pain often disappears without changing load.</p>	 <p>FORM OVER LOAD</p> <p>Light weight with full range of motion before adding load. Good movement protects joints for decades. Ego lifts destroy them in weeks.</p>	 <p>BRACE YOUR CORE</p> <p>Create intra-abdominal pressure before every lift, every single rep. Your spine requires constant protection regardless of the weight on the bar.</p>
 <p>RIR — STOP SHORT</p> <p>Leave 1-2 reps in reserve. Optimises recovery, enables higher frequency and volume across the week without burning out.</p>	 <p>FLAT SHOES</p> <p>For deadlifts, squats, leg press — ditch the cushioned runners. Immediate improvement in force transfer, stability, and knee pain.</p>	 <p>MOBILITY WORK</p> <p>10 min of shoulder, hip, ankle mobility before heavy lifting. Prevents the joint pain that keeps you out of the gym entirely. Prevention beats treatment.</p>

80% YEAR-ROUND BEATS 100% FOR ONE MONTH — EVERY TIME

Six weeks of perfect adherence followed by two months of chaos means you restart from zero every 12 weeks. Consistency at 75-80%, week after week, compounds. After 12 weeks, people don't recognise you — not because you did something heroic, but because you did something small, repeatedly.

CHAPTER 05

Master the Boring Basics

Building the floor before the ceiling

Building the floor before the ceiling — by mastering the boring basics.

— Pankaj N.

Before implementing advanced strategies, focus on the fundamental habits that yield the biggest results. This 'floor' includes consistent, adequate sleep (7–9 hours), sufficient daily water intake, and managing baseline stress levels.

The Five Non-Negotiables

1. Sleep — The Most Underrated Fat Loss Tool

Understand that a calorie deficit is the mechanism of fat loss. But without adequate sleep, hunger hormones (ghrelin and leptin) go haywire, cravings spike, and adherence collapses. 7–9 hours, consistent timing, is not optional — it's the foundation.

2. Consistent Eating Patterns

Focus on consistent, repeatable eating patterns rather than complex, restrictive diets. This involves tracking or mindful estimation and prioritising food choices that align with your energy needs. Complicated doesn't mean effective.

3. Protein and Fibre — The Dietary Floor

Optimise your diet for satiety and muscle preservation. Ensure high protein intake — essential for muscle repair and increasing thermogenesis — and high fibre intake, critical for gut health and feeling full. These two macronutrients form the dietary floor.

- Protein: essential for muscle preservation during fat loss, highly satiating, thermogenic
- Fibre: gut health, volume, satiety — eat your food, don't drink it

4. NEAT — Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis

Integrate more movement into your daily routine — aiming for a consistent step count or breaking up long periods of sitting. This low-intensity activity burns significant calories over time and supports a more active lifestyle without touching your formal training.

5. Regular Check-Ins and Strategic Adjustments

Life changes, and your plan must adapt. Implement regular check-in periods — monthly at minimum — to assess adherence, measure progress beyond the scale, and make strategic adjustments to training or nutrition as needed. Self-correction is the skill that compounds over time.

Transitioning to Intuitive Eating

The long-term goal is to gradually transition away from strict tracking towards listening to your body's hunger and fullness cues. This is the ultimate goal of long-term sustainability — where healthy choices become automatic and enjoyable, not effortful.

Always embrace flexibility with the 80/20 rule — allow for planned, mindful indulgence (the 20%) while consistently adhering to your core habits (the 80%). This minimises feelings of deprivation and makes the fat loss journey compatible with a fulfilling social life.





When you're ready to amplify your progress, expert, personalised remote coaching provides the clarity and accountability needed to master these habits and fast-track your success.

CHAPTER 05 · MASTER THE BORING BASICS


THE FLOOR BEFORE THE CEILING

Advanced strategies fail on a weak foundation. These five non-negotiables are responsible for 80% of your results — and most people skip them.

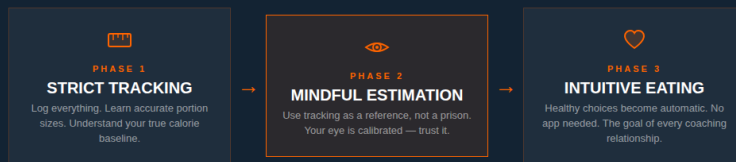
THE FIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

01 	<p>SLEEP — THE MOST UNDERRATED TOOL</p> <p>7–9 hours. Consistent timing. Without it, hunger hormones ghrelin and leptin go haywire, cravings spike, and adherence collapses. Everything else depends on this one habit.</p>	<p>Same sleep and wake time every day. This is not optional. It is the foundation of the entire system.</p>
02 	<p>CONSISTENT EATING PATTERNS</p> <p>Repeatable, predictable meals — not complicated, restrictive diets. Fewer decisions means better decisions. Boring patterns at regular times outperform optimised chaos every single time.</p>	<p>The same 3 meals at roughly the same times. Simplify your system to protect your decision-making energy.</p>
03 	<p>PROTEIN + FIBRE — THE DIETARY FLOOR</p> <p>Protein preserves muscle and increases thermogenesis. Fibre drives gut health and satiety. These two macronutrients determine whether your diet is sustainable — everything else is secondary.</p>	<p>Hit protein first at every meal. Eat your food, don't drink it. Volume and satiety are the tools that make calorie restriction manageable.</p>
04 	<p>NEAT — MOVE MORE OUTSIDE THE GYM</p> <p>Non-exercise activity thermogenesis burns significant calories over time without touching formal training. Steps, standing, walking — it compounds quietly and consistently every day.</p>	<p>Target 7,000–10,000 steps daily. Break up sitting every 45–60 minutes. Take stairs by default, always.</p>
05 	<p>MONTHLY CHECK-INS</p> <p>Life changes and your plan must adapt. Every 4 weeks: assess adherence, measure progress beyond the scale, make strategic adjustments. Self-correction is the skill that compounds over time.</p>	<p>Photos, measurements, energy levels, sleep quality. The scale is one data point — not the whole picture. Adjust and keep going.</p>




THE 80/20 RULE — FLEXIBILITY WITHOUT GUILT

<p>80%  CORE HABITS Sleep · Protein · Training · Tracking · Steps</p>	<p>20% Mindful Flexibility</p>
<p>The 20% is planned, not accidental — a wedding, dinner out, a celebration. This is what makes the system compatible with real life and why you never feel deprived enough to quit.</p>	

THE LONG-TERM PATH: FROM TRACKING TO INTUITION



MONTHLY CHECK-IN FRAMEWORK — WHAT TO ASSESS

<p> BODY COMPOSITION Photos + measurements + 4-week weight trend. Not single weigh-ins. Trends, not data points.</p>	<p> ADHERENCE AUDIT How many days did you actually hit your targets? Honest answer only — the data doesn't lie.</p>	<p> QUALITY OF LIFE Energy, sleep quality, gym performance, hunger. Progress extends far beyond the scale.</p>
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"Easy is sustainable. Sustainability is where results live. Start with a routine you can maintain when life gets messy."
 — PANKAJ NARSIAN, CSCS

ABOUT THE COACH

Pankaj Narsian, CSCS

Health & Fitness Strategist | Senior Faculty, INFS | 13+ Years Experience

Pankaj Narsian is a seasoned Health and Fitness Strategist with over 13 years of experience helping people transform their bodies and lives. An NSCA-certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, Pankaj blends science, practical experience, and empathy to design programs that go far beyond traditional fitness coaching.

He began his career as a personal trainer and, over the years, has coached several individuals across different age groups — from working professionals seeking body transformation to youth athletes competing at the national level. Since 2020, Pankaj has also been working extensively as an online coach, allowing him to reach and support clients across geographies while maintaining the same high standards of accountability and personalisation.

Beyond his one-on-one coaching practice, Pankaj serves as a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Nutrition and Fitness Sciences (INFS) in Pune. Here, he trains and mentors aspiring fitness coaches, emphasising evidence-based methods, practical application, and a client-first philosophy. His teaching role keeps him at the forefront of evolving research while shaping the next generation of fitness professionals.

Together with his wife Aditi, Pankaj co-founded Layman Fitness — a coaching company that reflects his personal values of integrity, perseverance, and humility.

I coach because I want people to live a life of meaning and feel more fulfilled, using their body as the vehicle for emotional, mental, and physical change. When the body and mind are in place, people stop leaking energy into chaos and start showing up for the bigger goals of their life — with clarity, confidence, and consistency.

— Pankaj Narsian

His approach is straightforward yet deeply personalised. Instead of following a one-size-fits-all system, he carefully tailors programs based on an individual's intent, lifestyle, and capabilities. His training methodology spans strength, endurance, mobility, flexibility, and conditioning, ensuring well-rounded development.

At the heart of his philosophy lies a belief that the body is a vehicle for much more than aesthetics — it's a tool for emotional balance, mental clarity, and personal growth. His clients often come for fat loss or strength, but leave with something bigger: the ability to live a more meaningful and fulfilling life.

READY TO GO FURTHER?

You've got the blueprint. You understand the mindset. You know the metabolic system. You know what functional fitness looks like and what the boring basics are. Now the question is: what happens next?

Most people read a guide like this, feel motivated for a few days, and then drift back to what's familiar. That's not a willpower problem. That's a structure problem. The missing piece is usually accountability — someone who knows your situation, tracks your data, and adjusts your plan when life happens.

That's what we do at Layman Fitness.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

You've got the blueprint. Now let's build your plan together.

Book a free 20-minute discovery call:

+91 9819522842

laymanfitness.com
pn.coach@musclelayman.com