



Guide to Overcoming Weight Loss Resistance

LEARN THE TOP CULPRITS
THAT INTERFERE WITH
WEIGHT LOSS AND HOW
TO FIX THEM.

WEIGHT LOSS RESISTANCE

What is it?

You feel like you're doing everything right. You've cut out processed foods, you're exercising and eating loads of veggies. But still, the needle on the scale won't move.

Sound familiar? If so, know you're not alone... and it's not your fault. You may simply have a case of weight loss resistance.

What is Weight Loss Resistance?

Simply put, it's when your body has imbalances that make losing weight extremely difficult.

Some of these imbalances include:

- High cortisol due to chronic stress
- Excessive blue light exposure
- Heavy metal toxicity
- Estrogen dominance
- Low testosterone
- Hypothyroidism
- Blood sugar dysregulation
- Sleep disturbances
- Gut microbiome imbalances



As you can see, the list is a long one! Luckily, once these imbalances are addressed, weight loss gets *much* easier.

This guide will give you a bird's eye view of the common causes of weight loss resistance, along with helpful tips and resources. That way, you can get the support you need to help your body come back into balance -- so you can finally shed excess weight.

CULPRIT #1: HIGH CORTISOL

Cortisol, your body's main stress hormone, has a major impact on your weight. It **regulates your blood sugar, influences your metabolism**, suppresses your immune system, and reduces inflammation in your body. So when cortisol stays high for too long, things can go haywire.

High cortisol levels can **increase your appetite** and cause **cravings for sugary and fatty foods**, which may lead to weight gain. High cortisol can cause you to **store excess belly fat** (aka "stress belly").

Signs of high cortisol:

- Weight gain, especially around the belly
- Irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Extreme fatigue
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Muscle weakness
- High blood sugar



How to test:

Cortisol levels rise and fall throughout the day. So the first step is to take a 24-hour cortisol test. Be sure to work with a practitioner so they can help you interpret the results. Also, technology such as the Oura ring and others can help you track stress levels.

To learn more about adrenal imbalances, check out [this article](#).

How to address it:

Balance your blood sugar and find ways to relieve your stress, whether that's:

- Meditation
- Spending time in nature
- Gentle exercise
- Breathwork
- Journaling
- Taking adaptogenic herbs

CULPRIT #2: BLUE LIGHT EXPOSURE

Yep, that's right. Spending too much time staring at your phone, laptop, or TV may show up on the scale. Electronic devices emit blue light, which **disrupt your body's sleep wake cycle**, also known as your circadian rhythm.

Evidence shows that excessive blue light exposure in the evening can **trigger metabolic changes** that may lead to weight gain.

Signs of excessive blue light exposure:

- Eye strain
- Headaches or migraines
- Blurry vision
- Poor sleep
- Trouble focusing

To learn more about how blue light affects your health, check out [this article](#).



How to protect yourself from blue light:

- Dim lights once the sun goes down.
- Use [red light bulbs](#) for night lights and reading lamps. They're less likely to disrupt the sleep hormone melatonin.
- Avoid electronics for 2-3 hours before bed (or limit them at the very least).
- Use [blue light blocking glasses](#) when you do look at screens at night.
- Install blue light screen filters like [Flux](#) on phones, laptops, and tablets.

CULPRIT#3: HEAVY METAL BUILDUP

Heavy metals like mercury and lead are everywhere. They're found in the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the products we use. When these toxic metals build up, it can affect your health, *and* your waistline.

Research shows **heavy metal accumulation is linked with a higher BMI and waist-circumference**. But it's hard to pinpoint why.

Some say it's because heavy metals **disrupt hormone production**. Others say it's because they **deplete minerals**, which can lead to weight gain. Either way, removing these toxic metals may correct these imbalances... which may help you lose weight.

Signs of heavy metal buildup:

- Chronic fatigue
- Brain fog
- Memory problems
- Anxiety or depression
- Insomnia
- Skin irritations
- Digestive problems
- Joint pain
- Tingling in hands and feet

How to test:

Heavy metal tests can be done via your blood, urine, hair, or even fingernails!

A slow, gentle approach is best for removing heavy metals. Work with a practitioner for guidance.



Other helpful tips:

Binders like activated charcoal and humic acid bind to toxic metals so they can be safely escorted from your body. Be sure to speak with your practitioner before doing this.

For more info on detoxing heavy metals naturally, check out [this article](#).

CULPRIT #4: ESTROGEN DOMINANCE

Estrogen is a reproductive hormone that works with its sister hormone progesterone. Together they **regulate the menstrual cycle** and **set the stage for pregnancy**.

But at times estrogen levels can get too high. This is known as estrogen dominance, and it can bring on a slew of symptoms, including weight gain.

Estrogen is made by a woman's ovaries, the adrenal glands, and even fat cells. The **more excess fat you carry, the higher your estrogen will be**. This can create a vicious cycle that can make it tough to lose weight.

Signs of estrogen dominance:

- Irregular menstrual cycles
- Heavy periods
- Severe PMS
- Loss of libido
- Infertility
- Fatigue
- Mood swings
- Hair loss
- Uterine fibroids
- Fibrocystic breasts
- Weight gain, especially around your hips, thighs, and mid-section

How to test:

You can test your estrogen through your urine or saliva.

In the functional medicine world, the DUTCH test is the one that's most commonly used.

Risk factors for high estrogen:

- Birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy
- Sluggish liver
- Poor gut health
- Problems with ovulation

Learn more in [this article](#).

Tips to begin addressing it:

- **Swap plastics for glass and stainless steel.** Plastics contain chemicals like BPA, which can disrupt hormone balance.
- **Eat a high fiber diet.** This helps your body remove excess estrogen via your poop.
- **Drink milk thistle or dandelion tea.** Both support the liver so it can detox excess estrogen.

CULPRIT #5: LOW TESTOSTERONE

Testosterone is the primary male sex hormone. It helps regulate libido, bone mass, and plays a key role in male fertility.

But testosterone also plays a role in **fat distribution** and **muscle mass for men and women**. Which means, when testosterone is running low, it's harder to build muscle. This can **slow down your metabolism**, which may cause the scale to creep up. Testosterone levels decline naturally with age. Yet there are ways to boost testosterone production.

Signs of low testosterone:

- Being overweight
- Loss of muscle mass
- Decreased sex drive
- Erectile dysfunction
- Low sperm count
- Fertility issues
- Irritability
- Depression
- Less beard growth

How to test:

You can test your testosterone levels with a simple blood test.

You can do this with an [at-home testosterone kit](#) or through a functional medicine practitioner.

It's best to do these tests in the morning, when testosterone is highest.



How to address it:

- **Eat a nutritious diet.** Include a good balance of protein, fats, and carbs to support testosterone production.
- **Physical exercise.** Weight lifting in particular is shown to boost testosterone levels.
- **Get daily sun exposure.** Vitamin D deficiency is linked with low testosterone levels.
- **Reduce stress.** High cortisol levels can cause testosterone to dip.

CULPRIT #6: HYPOTHYROIDISM

Your thyroid is a small butterfly, shaped gland that lives in your neck. Its job is to produce thyroid hormone, which **regulates your metabolism**.

But sometimes the thyroid struggles to make enough thyroid hormone. This is known as hypothyroidism. And **when the thyroid slows down, so does your metabolism**. That's why weight gain is one of the telltale signs of hypothyroidism.

Signs of hypothyroidism

- Sensitivity to cold
- Weight gain
- Hair loss
- Feeling tired
- Sore muscles and joints
- Depression
- Slow heart rate
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Heavy or irregular menstrual periods



How to test:

Get thyroid blood testing. You can do this through a health practitioner or use an at home kit (like [this one](#)).

Autoimmunity is the most common cause of hypothyroidism. So opt for a kit that tests **all your thyroid hormones** and **thyroid antibodies**. You can learn more in [this article](#).

How to address it:

Traditionally, hypothyroidism is treated by taking synthetic thyroid hormone.

Changing your diet may also improve thyroid function by restoring key nutrients.

Check out [this article](#) to learn more.

CULPRIT #7: BLOOD SUGAR ISSUES

Glucose (aka 'blood sugar') is your body's main source of energy. When you eat carbs, your body breaks them down into glucose. Your pancreas then secretes hormone insulin to help glucose get into your cells.

When you eat a lot of sugar or carbs, more insulin is secreted. When your body has excess insulin or blood sugar, that extra sugar is stored. Some is stored in your liver and muscles. But when those are full, that **extra sugar is stored as fat.**

That's why blood sugar dysregulation often leads to weight gain.

Signs of blood sugar imbalance:

- Feeling hungry
- Dizziness
- Irritability or anxiety
- Heart palpitations
- Feeling tired or weak
- Confusion
- Shaking
- Sugar cravings
- Headaches
- Tingling in the lips



How to test:

You can check your blood sugar from home with a [glucose monitor kit](#).

These do a simple finger prick so you can test your blood sugar any time of day.

How to address it:

In short? Keep your blood sugar as steady as possible. [This article](#) will walk you through how to do it.

And to learn more about balancing your blood sugar, consider following the [Glucose Goddess](#) on Instagram.

CULPRIT #8: SLEEP DISTURBANCES

Not sleeping well can make it tough to lose weight. Lack of sleep can **increase the stress hormone cortisol**. And as mentioned, when cortisol gets high, it can **increase your appetite** and **cause your body to hang onto fat**.

In fact, research shows that people who sleep less than 7 hours a night have a higher BMI and are more likely to be obese than those who get enough Zzz's.

Signs of poor sleep:

- Feeling unrested upon waking
- Waking up frequently throughout the night
- Having trouble falling asleep
- Feeling fatigued throughout the day
- Irritability
- Yawning frequently
- Trouble focusing



How to improve your sleep quality:

- **Keep a consistent sleep schedule.** Aim to get 7-9 hours of sleep every night.
- **Avoid blue light from electronics for 2-3 hours before bed.** Blue light exposure at night messes with your sleep-wake cycle.
- **Create an ideal sleep environment.** That means cool, dark, and quiet. Use black out curtains or a noise machine if needed. And drop the thermostat a few notches before bed.
- **Don't drink caffeine in the late afternoon.** Its effects can linger for up to 5 hours and may disrupt sleep.

CULPRIT #9: GUT IMBALANCES

Did you know over 10 trillion microbes live in your gut? These viruses, bacteria and fungi make up your gut microbiome. Some of these bugs are beneficial, while others aren't. But when your gut is healthy, these microorganisms coexist peacefully.

But sometimes your microbiome's balance get disrupted and the 'bad bugs' get out of hand. This can happen due to poor diet, stress, antibiotic overuse, or chronic infections.

Your microbiome affects your **digestion, how fat is stored in the body,** and the **hunger hormone ghrelin**. So when your microbiome gets out of balance, it can impact your weight.

Signs of Gut Imbalances

- Digestive issues like constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, gas, or bloating
- Skin issues like eczema, psoriasis, acne, rosacea, and dandruff
- Mental health problems like anxiety or depression
- Trouble sleeping
- Sugar cravings
- Fatigue

How to test:

Take a stool test to assess your microbiome's health. Kits vary, but they typically check for bad bacteria, yeast, viruses, and parasites

The GI-MAP test is considered the gold standard for testing your microbiome. Be sure to work with a practitioner to understand the results.

How to treat it:

- Eat probiotic rich foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, & kim chi
- Follow an anti-inflammatory diet such as the Mediterranean diet with plenty of high-fiber foods.
- Work with a holistic health practitioner to treat gut infections.