



THE FORAGE PROTOCOL

Companion Notes

The fine print behind the one-page system: the honest seed-oil verdict, what the cheat-day protocol actually does, the arithmetic behind the exercise dial, and notes for whoever does the cooking.

Food is fuel · Only tallow · Repeat meals · A banana a day · Grow one dial · Earn every meal

The Forage Protocol: Companion Notes

Mnemonic: Food is fuel · Only tallow · Repeat meals · A banana a day · Grow one dial · Earn every meal.

The one-pager is the whole system. This page is only the fine print: why the rules are what they are, the honest answers to the questions the protocol was built on, and tips for whoever does the cooking.

1. The seed-oil question, answered honestly

The question put to the research: are ultra-processed seed oils actually healthier than animal fat, as is often claimed? Here's the straight answer, because you deserve the straight answer, not a sales pitch in either direction:

- **Controlled trials** show that swapping butter/lard/tallow for polyunsaturated seed oils **lowers LDL cholesterol** and, in some older trials, cardiovascular events. That is the strongest evidence in seed oils' favor.
- **Mediterranean-diet trials** (the best dietary evidence that exists) favor extra-virgin **olive oil** over seed oils but olive oil is off your list by the tallow-only rule, and it's a fruit oil anyway.
- The **proven harms** in the oil literature are **trans fats** (banned, but still check labels for "partially hydrogenated") and **repeatedly heated frying oil** (deep-fryer oil is genuinely oxidized garbage). Home cooking in fresh tallow at normal temperatures is neither of these.
- No trial shows a tallow-only household is *healthier* than a mixed-fat household. No trial shows yours is *harmful* either. The difference is small either way at these doses.

Verdict: The instinct behind the rule is directionally right the hysteria is overstated on both sides and tallow-only is a workable rule. It stays in the plan not because the science demands it, but because **one fat, zero decisions** is worth more than a theoretically optimal fat you would have to think about. Keep deep-fried food rare regardless of which fat is in the fryer.

Sourcing tallow: buy jarred beef tallow (most grocery/butchers, or online), render your own from meat trimmings (low oven, 2–3 hours, strain into a jar keeps months refrigerated), or ask a butcher for beef/pork fat trimmings, which are often free.

2. What the cheat-day protocol is actually doing

- **The 90-second muscle burn before meals** is the one piece with solid mechanistic support: contracting muscle pulls glucose transporters (GLUT4) to the cell surface, so incoming cheat-meal calories partition toward muscle rather than fat storage. This is the same trick as the daily "earn every meal" rule Ferriss applied it to cheat day, and it works both days.

- **Grapefruit/citrus, caffeine, protein-first ordering:** minor effects individually (slower gastric emptying, earlier satiety), real in combination. They're cheap, so they're in.
- **The real function of cheat day** is psychological and hormonal: scheduled indulgence prevents the deprivation-binge cycle, and one high-calorie day blunts the metabolic slowdown of a long deficit. One honest caveat from the literature: if you ever notice cheat day turning into uncontrollable eating rather than enjoyable eating, shrink it to one cheat **meal** the protocol works identically.
- Note on ketosis: the slow-carb original isn't truly ketogenic, so don't chase "staying in ketosis" on cheat day chase **damage control**, which is what the protocol does.

3. The arithmetic behind the exercise dial

The one-dial rule front-loads walking because walking is the highest-tolerance, lowest-injury fat-loss tool you have at a heavier starting weight, and saves intensity for later. If you always turn the **walk-minutes** dial, the timeline looks like this:

Week	Walks (Mon/Wed/Fri)	Saturday	Weekly total
1	30 min	45 min	135 min
8	50 min	65 min	215 min
16	60 min	90 min	270 min
20+	60 min	90 min	270 min + optional jog intervals

Around **week 12–16** you cross 250 minutes/week the dose where clinically meaningful weight loss and blood-pressure improvements show up in trials. From there, turn the **weight/reps** dial on lift days instead and let walking hold steady. The unlock gates on the one-pager (jogging only under 118 kg, P90X only at month 6–7 (~111 kg)) are there to protect knees and lower back that have not carried a lighter body in years respect the gates even when you feel impatient; feeling ready early is exactly when injuries happen.

Weight checkpoints (example trajectory from a heavier start): month 3 $\approx$ 125 kg, month 6 $\approx$ 111 kg, month 9 $\approx$ 102 kg, month 12 = 90–98 kg. Adjust for your own start and goal. Week-to-week scale noise of ± 1.5 kg (water, salt, cheat-day glycogen) is normal judge by the month, not the Monday.

4. Notes for the cook (hand this section over)

- **Sunday batch prep (45 min):** hard-boil a dozen eggs, cook a pot of rice, roast a tray of potatoes in tallow, wash greens, portion jerky/cheese into grab bags. This is 80% of the Shelf's work for the week.
- **Fermented foods:** start at one forkful a day for week one (kimchi is spicy-strong for beginners; sauerkraut and pickles are the gentle entries). Kefir counts as fermented and doubles as breakfast when

rushed. Buy refrigerated fermented products (bubbly, in the cold section), not shelf-stable vinegar-pickled versions live cultures are the point.

- **Partitioned serving:** serve protein on a platter, veg in a bowl, starch in a small bowl with an ice-cream scoop resting in it (one level scoop per person on the protocol), fermented in a side dish. Kids serve themselves the same food; nobody needs separate meals.
- **Label watch:** bacon, jerky, sausage, mayo-adjacent condiments and anything packaged are the usual seed-oil smugglers check for canola/sunflower/soybean oil in the ingredients; most stores carry a compliant brand of each.
- **Flavor stays, by design:** everything on the plan is cooked in tallow with salt, garlic, paprika, cumin, salsa, hot sauce, vinegar and lemon. This is not a bland-food diet. If a recipe calls for oil, use tallow; if it calls for butter, use butter.

5. If something has to give

Priority order when life explodes (travel, illness, chaos): **(1)** never drink calories, **(2)** shelf-only between meals, **(3)** the 90-second earn-it, **(4)** daily walk. These four alone carry ~70% of the result. Lift days and the partitioned-plate details are the first to bend, the last to break and "one bad day changes nothing" is a rule, not a platitude. Miss a day, restart the next meal, no guilt audit required.

This is a lifestyle system compiled from published research and clinical guidelines it is not medical advice. If you carry risk factors such as excess weight, joint pain, or sleep apnea, run the plan past a doctor, keep using any prescribed treatment (such as a CPAP) every night, and let your care team adjust it as the weight comes off.