FREE GUIDE

THE FIVE POINT CHECK

Your weight has stopped moving and you are about to cut your calories again. Run this check first.

Sam Barnett · BSc (Hons) Sport & Exercise Science, MSc Strength & Conditioning · 700+ men coached

When a client tells me the scale has not moved, I leave his food alone to begin with. First I make him go through five things: his steps, his water, his calories, his protein and his sessions. He checks them for every day of the week, and "most days" does not count.

Most of the time one of them has slipped, and that is the answer. Cutting calories on top of a week where your steps, water or protein were missing makes you tired and weak, and the real problem is still there afterwards.

INSIDE

01 The five checks, with the targets I usually set

02 Your own five numbers, written down

03 The weekly audit to fill in

04 Scale not moving? Work through this in order

05 What to do next

HOW TO USE THIS

Read the five checks once and write your own numbers on page 4. Print the audit on page 5, or copy it into your notes. Score one full week before you change anything about your food or your training.

THE FIVE CHECKS

These are the targets I usually start clients on. They are starting points, and yours may be set differently. Hit every one, every day, before you change anything else.

1 STEPS — Around 10,000 a day

WHY IT MATTERS

Daily activity is the first thing I change for fat loss, before food. Steps are the easiest activity to add because they need no kit and very little recovery. If you are sitting on four or five thousand, this is where your progress is hiding.

MY USUAL TARGET

I usually start clients on 10,000 steps a day. It can be set higher or lower depending on the man, his job and his week.

HOW TO TRACK IT

Use your phone or watch and keep it on you all day. Check the count at 6pm, while there is still time to fix it.

IF YOU ARE OFF

Walk for 10 to 15 minutes after your biggest meal, take calls on your feet and take the stairs. If you are a long way short, build up week by week until the target is normal for you.

2 WATER — Around 2.7 litres a day

WHY IT MATTERS

When you are short on water you often feel more tired, hungrier and weaker in your sessions. A steady amount every day also makes your weight easier to read, because the water you are holding moves the scale from one morning to the next.

MY USUAL TARGET

Around 2.7 litres is what I usually set. The exact amount depends on the person, and you will need more if you sweat a lot or it is hot.

HOW TO TRACK IT

Use one bottle and know its size. Count the refills and log the total at the end of each day.

IF YOU ARE OFF

Carry the bottle all day and drink a glass with every meal. Get most of it in before the evening so you are not up in the night.

ONE RULE FOR ALL FIVE

A day only gets a tick if you hit the target. Nearly hitting it gets no tick. That is strict on purpose, because a week of nearly is how a stall starts.

THE FIVE CHECKS

3 CALORIES — Your target, every day

WHY IT MATTERS

Calories decide whether your weight goes down, up or stays where it is. A lot of men who say they are stuck are on target during the week and guessing at the weekend. The weekend is part of the week, and it counts.

MY USUAL TARGET

There is no single number here. Your target depends on your size, your activity and your goal, so with my clients I set it for the individual. If you have no target yet, log everything you normally eat for seven days and use the daily average as your starting number. Hold it steady while you get the other four checks right.

HOW TO TRACK IT

Log your calories and macros (protein, carbs and fats) in a tracking app, every day. Weigh your food where you can and log the oils, sauces, snacks and drinks. A portion method is the back-up, only if tracking is absolutely impossible for you.

IF YOU ARE OFF

A long way over and a long way under both count as a miss. Find the meal you guess most often and log it before you eat it.

4 PROTEIN — Around 1.8 g per kg of bodyweight

WHY IT MATTERS

Protein helps you keep your muscle while the fat comes off, and it keeps you fuller for longer. If you lose weight without enough of it, more of what you lose can be muscle, and you end up smaller and weaker when you wanted to be leaner.

MY USUAL TARGET

I usually set around 1.8 g per kilo of bodyweight, adjusted to the person. An 80 kg man is looking at roughly 144 g a day.

HOW TO TRACK IT

It sits in the same app as your calories. Check your protein total at the end of each day against your number.

IF YOU ARE OFF

Build every meal around a protein source first, then add the rest. Trying to make it all up at dinner is too late. Fix your weakest meal of the day with one swap.

THE FIVE CHECKS

5 SESSIONS

Every session you planned

WHY IT MATTERS

Training gives your body the reason to keep its muscle and strength while you lose fat. It only does that job if the sessions actually happen.

MY USUAL TARGET

There is no number I give everyone. How often you train depends on your life, your recovery and your goal. The check is simple: every session you planned for this week gets done.

HOW TO TRACK IT

Put your sessions in your calendar at the start of the week. Log every set, so you know what you are trying to beat next time.

IF YOU ARE OFF

Move a missed session to another day in the same week. If you keep missing the same one, the plan does not fit your week. Plan the sessions you can do every week, hit all of them, then build from there.

YOUR FIVE NUMBERS

Write them down before you start the week. A target you have not written down is a guess.

STEPS	_____	a day	I usually set 10,000
WATER	_____	litres a day	I usually set around 2.7
CALORIES	_____	kcal a day	Set for you, or your 7 day average
PROTEIN	_____	g a day	Your bodyweight in kg x 1.8
SESSIONS	_____	this week	The number you planned

YOUR WEEKLY AUDIT

Tick a box only if you hit the target that day. If you are not sure you hit it, you did not. Write your weight in each morning so you finish the week with an average.

Week starting: _____

CHECK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL
1 STEPS My target:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	/ 7
2 WATER My target:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	/ 7
3 CALORIES My target:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	/ 7
4 PROTEIN My target:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	/ 7
5 SESSION* Planned this week:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	/ 7
MORNING WEIGHT Not scored. Write it in.								avg

*On a planned rest day, tick Session. Resting when you planned to rest is sticking to the plan.

SCORE

_____ / 35

THIS WEEK'S AVERAGE WEIGHT

_____ KG

LAST WEEK'S AVERAGE WEIGHT

_____ KG

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

BELOW 35
That is your answer. Fix whatever slipped and run the week again. Leave your calories where they are.

35, AND YOUR AVERAGE IS COMING DOWN
It is working. Change nothing and keep going.

35, AND YOUR AVERAGE HAS NOT MOVED
Go to the next page and work through it in order.

WHAT SLIPPED THIS WEEK _____

WHY IT SLIPPED _____

WHAT I WILL FIX NEXT WEEK _____

SCALE NOT MOVING?

WORK THROUGH THIS IN ORDER

Start at the top. Only move down a step when the one above it is honestly done. Most men jump straight to step five, which is why they end up tired and still stuck.

1 IS IT ACTUALLY STUCK? Read the average

Weigh yourself every morning, after the toilet and before you eat or drink. One morning tells you very little, because water, food and sleep move the number every day. Add up the seven days and divide by seven, then compare that average with last week's.

Average coming down: it is working, change nothing. Average the same for two weeks running: go to step 2.

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2 DID YOU SCORE 35? The five checks

Run the audit on the page before this one for a full week. If any box is empty, that is what you fix next week. Your calories stay exactly where they are.

Below 35: fix what slipped and repeat the week. A real 35: go to step 3.

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3 IS YOUR TRACKING ACCURATE? Calories and macros

Check that what you log is what you eat. Weigh your food for a week, and log the oils, sauces, snacks, drinks and both days of the weekend. Guessed portions are the most common reason a target looks hit when it was missed.

Found a gap: close it and repeat the week. Tracking is tight: go to step 4.

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4 INCREASE YOUR ACTIVITY This comes before food

Raise your daily step target and hold the new number every day. Add a walk after meals and do more of your day on your feet. Give each increase a full week, then read your average again. Keep adding activity until there is honestly no more room for it in your day.

Average moving again: stay here. Nothing left to add: go to step 5.

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5 ONLY NOW, BRING CALORIES DOWN The last step

Take your calories down by a small amount and keep your protein, water, steps and sessions on target. Hold it, and judge it by the weekly average like everything else.

WHY THE ORDER MATTERS

If you cut calories first, you end up tired, weak in the gym and unable to focus at work, and you have nowhere left to go the next time things stall. Activity goes up first. Calories come down last.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Reading this changes nothing until you run it. Here is the week in front of you.

TODAY	Write your five numbers on page 4. If you have no calorie target, start logging what you normally eat.
EVERY MORNING	Weigh yourself and write it in the audit.
EVERY EVENING	Tick the boxes you hit. Leave the rest empty.
END OF THE WEEK	Add up your score out of 35 and work out your average weight.
NEXT WEEK	Fix what slipped. If you scored a real 35 and your average has not moved, follow the order on page 6.

THE STANDARD

When fat loss stalls, one of these five has usually slipped and nobody was checking. So check every day, read the scale by the week and change one thing at a time. If you planned it, it gets done.

MORE FREE HELP

TIRED IN EVERY SESSION?

Fuel Like A Fighter, my free guide to eating for hard training.
thebarnettvision.com/fuel

LIFTS NOT GOING UP?

My free rep target tracker, so your load moves every week.
thebarnettvision.com/tracker

WANT ME TO SET YOUR NUMBERS?

The targets in this guide are where I usually start. With my clients I set every number for the individual, check it with him every week and adjust it as his body changes. If you want that, comment ELITE on any of my posts and I will send the application to your DMs, or apply at thebarnettvision.com/elite

General guidance for healthy adults. The targets shown are usual starting points and vary from person to person.