



FOREWORD BY Sara Gottfried, MD, AUTHOR OF *The Hormone Cure*  
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## **The Adrenal Reset Diet: Strategically Cycle Carbs and Proteins to Lose Weight, Balance Hormones, and Move from Stressed to Thriving**

*Alan Christianson, Sara Gottfried (Foreword)*

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GO FROM WIRED AND TIRED TO LEAN AND THRIVING...

Why are people gaining weight faster than ever before? The idea that people simply eat too much is no longer supported by science. The emerging idea is that weight gain is a survival response. Our bodies are under attack from all directions—an overabundance of processed food, a polluted world, and the pressures of daily life all take their toll. These attacks hit a little known but very important set of glands, the adrenals, particularly hard.

One of their many jobs is to maintain a normal cortisol rhythm (cortisol is a hormone associated with both stress and fat storage). When this rhythm is off, we can become overwhelmed more quickly, fatigued, gain weight, and eventually, develop even more severe health issues such as heart disease or diabetes.

Unsuspecting dieters cause more harm than good by reducing the number of calories or carbohydrates they consume, which can disrupt cortisol production and cause weight gain.

In *The Adrenal Reset Diet*, Dr. Alan Christianson provides a pioneering plan for optimal function of these small but powerful organs. His patient-tested weight-loss program is the culmination of decades of clinical experience and over 75,000 patient-care visits. In a study at his clinic, participants on the Adrenal Reset Diet **reset their cortisol levels by over 50% while losing an average of over 2 inches off their waists and 9 pounds of weight in 30 days**. What can *you* expect?

- Learn whether your adrenals are Stressed, Wired and Tired, or Crashed and which adrenal tonics, exercises, and foods are best for you
- The clinically proven shakes, juices, and other delicious recipes, to use for your Reset
- New ways to turn off the triggers of weight gain with carbohydrate cycling, circadian repair, and simple breathing exercises
- An easy 7-day ARD eating plan to move your and your adrenals from Surviving to Thriving

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **The Adrenal Reset Diet: Strategically Cycle Carbs and Proteins to Lose Weight, Balance Hormones, and Move from Stressed to Thriving Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Adrenal Reset Diet: Strategically Cycle Carbs and Proteins to Lose Weight, Balance Hormones, and Move from Stressed to Thriving for online ebook**

### **Shirley says**

Feb 20, 2015: I gave this four stars instead of five because I felt he made himself out to be an expert on everything and no one is an expert on everything. That said, I saw myself completely in what he described about adrenal fatigue (ended up being "crashed") and I immediately instituted the basic protein shake recipe for breakfast and the salad basic recipe for lunch. I cannot believe the difference in how I feel all day long. I have gone from three cups of caffeine per morning to one or none. I eat now because I am hungry, not because I feel faint. Daily afternoon sugar cravings-gone.

I thought the transition to a shake for breakfast would be very challenging for me. I have always had whole grain cereal etc for breakfast. And while my breakfasts before were not unhealthy at all, they were too much carb for my system. It took me literally one-two days to be a believer.

The best part: I feel much better and have energy again.

Nice side benefit: I am losing about a pound a week.

Next step: healthier dinners

I highly recommend the book for those who are truly tired and not getting out of life what they want. It's easy changes for better living!

Update 10/20/16: Still doing the protein shakes and salads from this book for lunch each day. Still feeling all the benefits I mentioned above in addition to the nice sidebar of keeping weight off. This was a lifestyle change not just a knee-jerk reaction to reading the book close to two years ago.

Update 10/12/17: Ditto what I said on 10/20/16.

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### **Jessica says**

Easy to read, good ideas, but his "daily routines" are laughable for anyone with a full time job and the recipes all look unimpressive. I like the idea of carb cycling though.

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### **Jaidab says**

#### **hoping to reset my adrenals**

There was a lot I really liked about this book. I'm hoping to reset my fatigued adrenals, and doctor Christianson gives some great advice. For example, carb cycling. I love that concept. There were a few things, however, that I felt weren't practical at this point in my life. Such as the light therapy he suggests. I like the idea, but don't think I'd be able to follow through with the application. If you think you might be

having adrenal trouble, this book is for you.

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### **Michelle Hankes says**

My latest choice from Blogging for Books is a bit outside of my normal cookbook routine. However, I have a love of non-fiction self-help books from long ago. I debated about this one for quite some time because I am not a diet book fan. I don't like the latest crazes, easy fixes or some book that is going to fix everything and everyone in your life with three simple steps.

Do you know why I don't like these books? Because I've used them and they don't work. There is no easy fix. In fact, I'm convinced now, more than ever, that no fix is ever needed. And really, that comes from my presumption that we are truly whole already, we just don't always know it and we don't always practice the walk that creates the experience of that wholeness. Thus, I'm not really a lover of self-help fix-it books, but I do like books that provide introspection and a new perspective on who we are, why we choose what we do, and how we can alter those choices.

This is one of those books.

In the world of diet and self-help books, fix-it sells. So, there's a small amount of that present in this book - in the marketing. By reading it thoroughly and at a leisurely pace, I can clearly see and feel that the author has the best intentions. The marketers scream, "Lose weight!" But the naturopathic physician - the true identity of this author - is all about health, wellness, and resetting the many premises that have lead us to feeling overwhelmed, frazzled, overweight, and overdone. That is clarity I can appreciate.

I chose this book for a few reasons, mostly personal, but for some time, I have known that my adrenals are incredibly sensitive to many things and a few times in the past, I have overworked them. However, after reading his book, I realize that most of us have overworked adrenals just from the lives we live that include daily stress and pressures, poor food choices that include processed foods or even home-baked goods, and eating either too much of the wrong kinds of proteins or not enough. I have read many of the slightly scientific health books like the Zone Diet, the Genotype Diet, the Blood Type diet, the Hormone cure, all with a grain of salt. What I wanted was a more in-depth analysis of how our bodies work and what we can do to make all of that function at its peak. I'm not interested in the drop-ten-pounds diet, the look-great-naked diet, or the stop-eating-this-eat-that diet. However, they all sort of coincide. It just depends on what you are looking for, what your body might need, and if you like the science of symptoms. I do. I follow Dr. Sara Gottfried for this reason. She's an MD that writes extensively about the co-mersion of Western medicine and Eastern philosophies, as well as hormonal balancing. In truth, after having read many, many books about health and wellness, they all pretty much say the same thing, but with slightly different premises (and I'm not talking about the quick-fix diet books here): eat whole foods, primarily vegetables and some fruits, eat whole grains, listen to your body, eat when you are hungry, stop when you are full, avoid allergens. And sometimes, they include breathing exercises, meditation, journaling, affirmations, etc. To me, our food and body issues have arisen because we stopped listening to ourselves and our bodies. My interest has always been about understanding the body better and the choices that I make that either feed it's brilliant ability to self-heal or prevent that. The Adrenal Reset Diet is just another piece of that.

The book's premise lies in an easy set-up: understand what the adrenals do for your body, figure out where you are on the adrenal spectrum (Thriving, Stressed, Wired and Tired, Crashed), then understand how to reset yourself back to a state of Thriving where your body's cortisol levels, adrenal function and overall

hormonal balance comes back into a balanced state. Dr. Christianson's concept comes from years of being an adrenal and thyroid specialist. His practice led him to question how we could reset adrenal function to a point where the body can do all that it needs to do in order to maintain harmony. He experimented on himself first, then a few willing and aware patients. From there, he expanded out to more clients willing to try simple and easy things that might reset their adrenal overload. He met with great success. When he started with personal experimentation, he tried to opposite of his diet strategy plan and found that it created an increase in cortisol and adrenal production (which he tested at specific intervals), as well as weight gain, sleep issues, and a myriad of other problems. This, along with patient trials, convinced him of the overall effectiveness of this Adrenal Reset Diet (ARD) plan.

The basics of the ARD premise is simple: eat more protein, choose healthy fats, and cycle your carbs throughout the day in a specific way.

Simple. Basic. Yet, with the interesting science behind this theory, intriguing.

(The complexities of each level of adrenal function and the coinciding chapter offer many more ways to reset your adrenals including herbs, breathing exercises, light therapy, outdoor/nature experiences, sleep patterns, specific foods, etc. It's up to you how in-depth or how simplistic you want the ARD to be.)

I took this book with me on a recent vacation back to see my family. I wanted to do a little experiment of my own. If we made just a couple of changes, would we see or feel anything akin to what he describes? Would our adrenals become more supported and thus, decrease our cortisol levels and all the problems that go with high cortisol? Well, there's no way to fully know the latter of these two without adrenal and cortisol testing. We didn't do that, like Dr. Christianson does with patients. Instead, we went solely on sleep and feel, as well as potential body aches, pains, blood sugar, brain fog, and other assorted adrenal spectrum ailments. In fact, this is how Dr. Christianson suggests readers accomplish this. Follow the ARD, then retake the ARD test every few weeks or monthly until you are Thriving.

Here's what we did: we added the protein shake or a protein-based breakfast with organic veggies and minimal carbs for breakfast (according to the ARD). We added more carbs as the day went on, as per the ARD suggestions. We did nothing else because it was too hard to coordinate three people and their light needs, their sleep patterns, etc. I just wanted to see if what Dr. Christianson suggested to one of his patients - three simple changes: add 25 mg of protein to breakfast, diffuse some of the stress patterns, and turn off all artificial light, except a reading light, by 9pm - if only a few things would make a difference. It's all about changing the circadian rhythms to balance the adrenals. I was able to consistently make meals that increased the protein and vegetables, as well as the fiber content, while cycling the carbs (less in the morning, more in the evening) and for myself, I increased the natural light exposure early in the morning. We also made sure to eat within one hour of waking. And for one week, we followed those simple parts of the ARD.

What came of it all?

I noticed I slept better, as did my family members. One family member in his 70's wakes up repeatedly at night. He tends to be a night owl and late riser, as well as a restless sleeper, which remained the same, but during nearly the entire week, he stayed asleep throughout the night. And he didn't nod off as much throughout the day. I also noticed the emotional energy was softer. We have a lot of big personalities in my family and oftentimes, when the stress gets high, the emotions grow too. They feed each other. This seemed more minimal overall, as though everyone was better able to deal with the stressful situations. The situations didn't really change, but our response to them did, for the most part. (A definite cortisol reaction.) I also noticed that my mind felt clearer most of the day. We all noticed we wanted to eat less (felt full more of the

day), craved carbs and sugar less, and everything we ate tasted really good. We still ate sugar and treats, and went to bed late, but I did see changes. And incorporating more veggies and proteins into our meals turned out to be rather easy.

The tiny experiment makes me want to know more and go a little deeper into the ARD suggestions. Dr. Christianson has more specifics for each adrenal level and I am planning on incorporating more into my day. Long before I knew about the Adrenal Reset Diet book, I started to make some of the changes he suggests because I could feel how they changed my body's response to certain experiences - shut off computers and tablets a few hours before bedtime (turns out they speed up brainwaves and trigger cortisol); eat carbs in the evening (turns out slow-release carbs raise blood sugar slowly which makes us sleep better, but cortisol should be low in the evening or we get too ramped up to sleep well); licorice root tea in the morning and chamomile at night (supports the adrenals in the am and calms them at night); rely on whole foods (self-explanatory). He has a lot of other suggestions to support the body and the hormones that it uses to maintain itself. I found this book intriguing, not too overly wordy or science-y for those who aren't looking to become doctors, and a good source of information to understand the delicate endocrine system. By reading the book, I can tell he isn't a strong-and-fast stickler about all that he suggests. It's about balance, not discipline. And maybe the very things that are haunting us can be balanced with much greater ease than we think.

Author's note: There's a lot more to this book than in this review. He has some pretty great insight into what makes us gain weight, unable to lose weight, hormonal imbalances, etc. For me, these books are best reviewed based on personal experience because there are tons of books out there with the same sorts of information. That's why I just chose to dive right in. I want to see if this works for me or if I can incorporate pieces into my life that make sense. If you feel stressed, frazzled, overwhelmed, overworked, tired, worn out, angry, emotional all the time, or can't seem to lose weight, I would suggest you at least take a look into this book to see if it fits for you. Talk to your doctor or naturopath. There are no prescriptions in here or huge life changes - it's about listening to yourself, hearing your body, eating foods that make sense, and learning to simplify so you can feel better. There's nothing radical here. Just a return to simplicity in our world of overexposure to pretty much everything. Some things are going to resonate; some are not. It's not a quick-fix because whatever life-long patterns you have built that created where you are will continue to create where you are until you change them. Starvation doesn't work; extreme diets don't work; life changes do. And it's not about giving up everything. It's about finding peace in yourself and finding out who you truly are.

This book was given to me by Blogging for Books in exchange for an honest review.

<http://divine-by-nature.blogspot.com/...>

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### **Amy says**

I read about half of it, found much that is useful; more will be more useful to others. He contradicts himself several times, where riding the fence might be what he meant instead. I'd much rather encounter an honest fence-rider than an unclear contradictor. Part of the problem could be that better proofreading and copyediting is necessary.

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### **Julie says**

Didn't realize this wasn't just a diet book. The title is not accurate. The book started out pretty good, but then it didn't really provide solid information about "cycling carbs." In fact, it looks like there were editing issues with the book and one of the tables that was meant to clarify it was just a repeat of the previous "wrong thing to do" table. When I thought I'd get more details later in the book, it started to go into getting enough sleep and trying light therapy and meditation. The categories a person might be at with metabolism were hazily and hastily explained, so that I was left not understanding what I was and what I was supposed to do about it. The recipes are for the most part, kind of weird, but I'm taking from it to get more real food and less fake food into my diet, to eat complex carbohydrates instead of simple ones. I do need to cut back on sugar, but I don't know if replacing it with monk fruit is a good idea - why is that any better than Aspartame or Saccharine? I actually didn't technically finish the book, because it just kept getting lamer and lamer.

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### **Stacey Lynne says**

Lots of useful and helpful information. Worth a look. Still would recommend The Hormone Cure over this one, but this one goes into more depth regarding adrenal fatigue and carb cycling which expands the topic a bit more.

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### **Beth says**

Filled with useful information (that's supported by what I've been told by my naturopath for the past year, although she never once mentioned this book) and easy to understand, this book gives me hope for my adrenal fatigue issues. I highly recommend it for anyone looking to improve their health, weight-loss-oriented or not. The diet plan is simple in concept and I'm sure it'll be easy to follow. Hopefully, I'll see positive change after a few months- but if I don't, at least I have a better understanding of how my adrenals affect my body.

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### **Online Eccentric Librarian says**

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

The Adrenal Reset Diet takes a very different but also very intelligent stance on obesity: that processed foods, pollutants, and stress/pressures in life have caused our adrenal glands to kick into survival mode: their 'switch' is turned permanently toward converting food into fat rather than energy. This diet plan addresses the adrenal hormones to put the body back into proper focus and making the best use of the food we eat.

The plan has four distinctions that set it apart from most other diet books: 1) It is not a 'low anything' diet. The author takes the stance that food is the cure, not the enemy. 2) Carbs are not forbidden. The plan cycles through carbs to make the best use of them for your body and ensure they are made into energy rather than fat. 3) Sleep issues are addressed and fixed since that is often a huge problem with not taking weight off

(addressing circadian rhythms). 4) Clarity is restored through 5 minute rituals to stop pressure and stress from fooling the body into making fat.

The book makes the point that weight loss is not about willpower or courage. Rather, the weight has come on as a result of improper signals caused by processed food, pollution, and stress/pressures of modern life; those have turned the body into survival rather than thrive mode. Author Christianson believes almost all of the problems causing many individuals' weight issues are controlled through the adrenal glands; eating effectively and smartly will reset those adrenal signals to consume rather than store fat.

At heart, the book says that the reason to target the adrenal glands is because they regulate other hormones (including inflammation control, sleep/waking, blood sugar control). Those end up a huge factor in controlling weight since the adrenal hormones control whether energy goes toward muscles or fat. By cycling carbohydrates and eating the right food at the right time, the body will make the most of its food. There is, of course, a lot more to it than that (e.g., cortisol control) but it is all explained in the book in detail. As well, fine tuning other diets, such as paleo, to fit within the Adrenal Reset Diet ethos is discussed.

The diet itself does have one drawback in that you really do have to be very mindful of what you eat - and when. It's a new way of looking at meals that is very nitpicky in many ways but also can be frustrating in the minutiae since there is no comprehensive, mindless, "eat only low carb" or 'eat like a caveman' type of rule. Rather, it's about learning to eat fiber, protein, carbs, in various combos in very specific times of the day to achieve the best results. Although there are substitutions, it is a very specific diet that may defeat some dieters in its level of complexity and their desire to go into autopilot to lose weight. The Adrenal Reset Diet is both a very specific but also a very open plan - it's not about the recipes, just the times that you eat and in what fiber/protein/fat ratios.

A large portion of the book is dedicated to dealing with stress/pressure and sleep issues. I found a lot of the information in there fascinating (if a bit hard to put into actual application). Everything from avoiding sunlight for two hours after waking up (and the suggestion of wearing dark glasses if you have to go to work) - to getting a full 2 hours of sunlight every morning to help with circadian rhythms. It sounds nice ideally but honestly some applications are fairly impractical. This is another reason the diet plan here is both excellent and yet also daunting.

Since there is no 'low' anything, the recipes are fairly typical items: stir fry beef to breakfast shakes. There aren't many of them - the plan is open enough that it is more about thinking about what you eat and when you eat it than the items you are eating or portions. There is, of course, a list of foods to avoid - mostly processed or high sugar ingredients, toxic proteins, etc. There are also discussions about gluten free, vegan, beans, sweeteners.

Since this is such a unique perspective on dieting and such a different plan, I really do feel this is worth a read. A lot of what is in here does make sense and the author takes the time to explain it all in a no-nonsense but friendly manner. It's a very different take on why we can't seem to lose weight but keep packing it on in the modern world. As with most diets now, the focus is on lifestyle management and long term benefits. Unlike most diets, there really isn't a lot of 'fluff' discussion about the diseases caused by obesity or the epidemic itself. Most of the book is focused on the science of the adrenal glands and their role of converting food into fat.

Reviewed from an ARC provided by the publisher.

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## **Courtney La cava says**

I came upon the idea of reading this book online one time when someone said it was a helpful idea to 'cycle carbs' when you're trying to lose weight. And hey, anything that limits the consumption of unhealthy foods will work if you want to get healthier and lose weight. Especially if it has a positive effect on adrenal function, which as the book correctly suggests, can effect your cortisol levels and lead to gaining dangerous visceral fat. My interest was piqued.

This book lost me before I even got to page 25. Anytime someone uses the word 'toxins' (or more hilariously in this book, 'toxicants') I know it's junk science. What are the specific toxins? We usually never find out. I am also highly skeptical of people who tell you that counting calories is not effective or necessary for losing weight. That is ridiculous. Worse still is when someone tries to tell you your obesity or overweight-ness is solely a product of our food culture with its readily available processed foods and excessive carbs and dairy. Also a big no there. You choose what you eat. Maybe it's as hard as being an alcoholic at a bar, there's lots of temptation, sure, but nobody's forcing you to get a beer instead of a ginger ale. It's always about YOUR caloric choices, actually. A meta study of various studies on diet and exercise proved that time and time again the only way people lose weight and keep it off is to weigh yourself daily and count calories. It doesn't matter if it's Atkins, paleo, Mediterranean, some juice cleanse, or any other kind of specific diet. And I can speak to personal experience when I say that if you stop counting calories after you reach your goal weight, you'll gain back the weight- without accounting for what you can eat, you eat what your instinct tells you to: enough calories to maintain an equilibrium far closer to your original weight. And if getting on the scale everyday and seeing tiny setbacks from a bad day or water bloat is too discouraging, you don't have the mindset yet to do this right. Weight loss is hard and full of disappointment. You have to be able to face yourself, without denial, to fix yourself.

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## **Dru says**

I think that Alan Christianson is obviously a well respected doctor. I bought this book on the recommendation of Dr. Sara Gottfried. His carb cycling theory seems to work for a lot of people, according to his study. Since I have suffered from adrenal fatigue I was intrigued and wanted to learn more. But, I'm not really happy with the way the book is organized. It is too scant. (Like, what are eggs so bad?) I would have liked to have seen more density. However, I am going to try the golf ball method and see if it helps my sleep. I will continue to watch Dr. Christianson and look forward to what he has to say in the future.

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## **Crystal says**

Starting this book I had no intention of doing the actual diet. After finishing, I may try some of the recipes. I really enjoyed this book. I came across Dr. Christianson when looking up info for those who are optimally treated for Hypothyroidism but still occasionally symptomatic - me. The science totally makes sense to me and going forward I'm trying to cycle my carbs better. I'm having an issue with protein in the morning since I tend to be sensitive to dairy and eggs.

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### **Amy M says**

I find books like this very interesting, as I believe there is more to weight than calories in/calories out. Endocrinologist Dr Christianson has a unique plan that is very easy to make into a lifestyle change. He backs his theories up with studies and his own experiences, along with those of his patients. For those of us who are constantly on the go and running up to our limits, this is a good place to start if you want to feel better.

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### **Kristi L Clephane` says**

How good is this book? Well, without having finished it, I had already mentioned it and recommended it to two separate people. I really like how this book lays out a plan for people in different stages of adrenal fatigue. It makes a lot of sense, while reading about the symptoms of stress and fatigue.

"The adrenal reset diet" explains how to reset your adrenals depending on what stage of stress you're in, through diet, light therapy, carb cycling, and meditation. It's a really interesting book. I'm looking forward to testing some of the methods in this book!

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### **Ali says**

Good book, but I liked another book I read on adrenals better. There was some really good advice for the stressed. Not enough substitutes for non-meat eaters. Especially for breakfast.

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