

LEPTIN

**WHAT IT DOES:** “Leptin is produced by your body’s fat cells and it signals your brain to increase energy expenditure and decrease appetite in order to regulate your body weight,” Kirkpatrick explains. “If leptin levels become too high, you can become leptin-resistant, which means your body no longer responds to those appetite-reducing signals and stops burning energy.”

HOW TO HACK IT  
1 STOP THE SNACKING

“Snacking can lead to leptin resistance, so the best thing to do is limit your eating times to three small meals a day,” Kirkpatrick explains.

2 REDUCE INFLAMMATION

Inflammation can contribute to leptin resistance, so Kirkpatrick advises reducing your leptin levels by avoiding sugar and processed grains, increasing your intake of green vegetables, adding turmeric to your food daily and taking a good-quality fish-oil supplement.

3 SWEAT IT OUT

University of Cincinnati data has shown that exercise can cut leptin resistance. So – unlike with cortisol – Kirkpatrick says HIIT training is actually the best exercise for leptin resistance, but also warns against not overdoing things.



INSULIN

**WHAT IT DOES:** “When insulin is working well, it binds to glucose and delivers it to your cells so they can have energy,” says Kirkpatrick. “When insulin levels are too high, the cells reject the glucose and it’s stored as fat throughout your body.” Too much insulin in the blood can also cause insulin resistance, which can lead to diabetes and cause fat to accumulate around your mid-section.

HOW TO HACK IT

1 DITCH REFINED CARBS

“Although protein can stimulate insulin release, carbohydrates are the main culprits,” Kirkpatrick explains. “To keep your levels on track, reduce your intake of refined sugars and carbs, make protein and vegetables the stars of every meal,

and choose wholegrain carbs like seedy bread and brown rice.”

2 TRY RESISTANCE TRAINING

According to Kirkpatrick, weight training can decrease insulin resistance and up your body’s energy burn. “Walking isn’t quite enough,” she says. “Increasing muscle mass with resistance training is what you’re looking for.”

3 DRINK CINNAMON TEA

“Cinnamon tea can help lower blood-sugar levels by imitating the effects of insulin and increasing the intake of glucose into the cells,” says Kirkpatrick. “Aim for two cups of cinnamon tea most days or look for a supplement containing cinnamon and the mineral chromium.”

GHRELIN

**WHAT IT DOES:** “Ghrelin is an appetite-increasing hormone that can override the signals your gut sends to the brain that tell you to stop eating,” Kirkpatrick says.

“If you’re not eating enough or you’re stressed, ghrelin output increases and this can lead to weight gain.”

HOW TO HACK IT  
1 DO MORE HIIT

Interval training like HIIT maintains your ghrelin levels. Increased muscle mass is also associated with lower ghrelin production, so be sure to also add a few weights sessions to your routine.

2 NOSH ON PROTEIN

“Regular eating can help stabilise your ghrelin levels, as can eating enough protein, so make sure you’re consuming 1-1.5g of protein per kilogram of body weight every day,” adds Kirkpatrick.

3 CLOCK MORE SLEEP

Ghrelin levels decrease when you sleep as your body doesn’t need as much energy. If you don’t sleep enough, you can end up with too much ghrelin in your body, which will only make you feel more hungry.

Oestrogen is vital for women’s reproductive health and when it’s too high, it can cause weight gain around the tummy, hips and bum

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