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NUTRITION GUIDE

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Nutrition Guide

The great doctor of philosophy Hippocrates claimed “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” He was a very smart man and you should take his advice to the thought locker and keep it there.

As you are probably well aware, partaking in a regular fitness routine is only going to get you so far if you do not honor your dietary habits. Much like the quality of movement rule, diet is 90% of the game, which makes sense.

If you work hard in the gym five days a week and indulge in mass amounts of non-nutritive foods and beverages, how can you expect to make any progress? The sad reality is, you won't.

In the best of cases, you can maybe maintain your weight and stay in decent shape, but you will never be able to fully turn the corner and achieve the best body you can.

A smart and solid eating plan can keep you free from disease, give you better brain function and prevent inflammation through your entire body. These are the intrinsic values that you should look to for motivation to stay on track.

Education on food is your best approach in this case. Your goal is to make informed decisions when dining at home, at restaurants, on the road and at work.

Remember, every single cell in the human body regenerates in about one and a half years. These cells grow from the food you consume, so you definitely ARE what you eat. Keep that in mind when you reach for that bottle of pop, double chili cheeseburger and large order of fries.





Weight Loss Equation

What better way to start off a discussion about food than with weight loss? For some, this is a lifelong struggle, and for others it's just a quick-fix stage before a major event like a wedding, class reunion or vacation.

No matter how you try to break it down, the process is still the same. Your body contains subcutaneous and visceral fat. Subcutaneous is the type found right under the skin and you can easily palpate it with your hand.

Visceral fat is found deep inside the abdomen and surrounds the organs, which raises your risk for heart disease, diabetes and a number of other unwanted tragedies.

Although subcutaneous fat might make you feel self-conscious, it is relatively benign compared to visceral. When you lose weight, it occurs through your entire body as a whole. This includes your abdomen, arms, legs, face, neck and all other parts.

The end result is both subcutaneous and visceral fat disappear at the same time. You now have a win-win situation because you can regain your self-esteem while lowering your risk for colon cancer.

And you don't need to have a PhD to understand how to do this either. It's really a game of numbers. Burn more calories than you consume on a daily basis and you will create what's called a caloric deficit. When you have a caloric deficit, your body has no choice but to burn stored fat for energy. The end result is weight loss.

Flip the coin over and eat more calories than you burn, and you've just created a surplus. The end result of this is weight gain. Fun stuff huh?

That brings up calorie counting. Many people shudder at the thought of counting calories, but it's not as hard as it seems and it's definitely effective.

Your best approach is to keep a journal for five days and track every single crumb of food and sip of beverages you consume that contain calories for each day. Add all the daily sums together and divide by five to get an average.

For example, if you consume 1,800, 2,000, 1,700, 2,500 and 3,000 calories, your five-day total will be 11,000 calories. Divide this by 5 and your daily average intake would be 2,200 calories. Now you have the information you need to lose weight, gain weight or maintain.

For weight loss, in order to lose 1 lb., you need to burn 3,500 calories. You may already be familiar with this.



An easy way to achieve this deficit is by burning 500 calories a day. If you go back to the daily example, you would subtract 500 from 2,200 and be left with 1,700 calories. Since there are seven days in a week, a 500-calorie daily deficit would equate to 1 lb. of weight loss a week.

If you have more lofty goals and want to lose 2 lbs. a week, you'd need to create a 1,000-calorie daily deficit.

Here's where exercise comes into play. Reducing calories alone to lose weight is a good strategy, but a more foolproof plan would involve the inclusion of exercise. This approach is especially beneficial if you are striving for the 1,000-calorie reduction.

Instead of depriving yourself so much with food restriction, you can split the difference and burn 500 calories through exercise while cutting back 500 calories in your diet. Of course, if you were on the 500-calorie a day reduction plan, you can cut back by 250 and burn 250. You can also leave your daily caloric average where it is and burn all of your calories through exercise.

The way you do it is less important than actually creating the deficit. Do whatever works best for you and fits your lifestyle.

And just a quick note about calorie tracking. Most packaged foods that you buy will have calorie information listed, but foods like produce, grains and meats do not. In these cases, you will need to be a bit more vigilant with judging your portion sizes and finding out how many calories they contain. It's advisable to seek out a good resource online that shows calorie contents of foods or find a book that does the same thing.

If you are cool with your weight, it's still a good idea to find out what your daily intake is. That way you can strive for that many calories every day and stay where you are.

If weight gain is your goal, then go the opposite direction. Find your daily average and add 250 calories to it. If you try to bite off more than you can chew, literally, you can end up with gastrointestinal issues. And they are not pretty!

If you are trying to lose or gain, follow the same calorie reduction or increase for two to four weeks. If you notice changes in your weight, stick with what you are doing. If you don't then decrease or increase your calories accordingly. Stick with the 500-calorie reduction for weight loss and the additional 250 calories for weight gain.



Caloric Quality

When you break it down, all calories are not created equal. From a physiological standpoint, you can eat junk food all day long and still lose weight if you are in a deficit. But unhealthy fare is not the best option.

Focus your attention more on the quality of calories you take in. This is often more important than the total amount. Take a comparison of soda and almonds into consideration. A 12-oz can of soda and 1/4-c serving of almonds might both be 120 calories, but which one is better for you?

Hopefully you can figure it out on your own without much thought. Soda is high in sugar with no nutritive value whatsoever. Almonds contain a high amount of protein, essential fats, fiber and a number of vitamins and minerals that are all beneficial to your body.

While soda is considered empty calories, almonds are considered nutrient dense, which makes them the obvious better option. Always keep this in mind when you are selecting your foods.

Macronutrients

This makes a good segue into macronutrients. The word “macro” means large or sizeable. When referencing to food, macronutrients are made up of protein, carbohydrates and fat.

From a caloric perspective, protein and carbs contain 4 calories per gram, while fat contains 9 calories per gram. Memorize that because it comes in handy when you are tracking.

Each one of the macronutrients has specific functions in the body and they are also found in specific foods. Certain foods contain two or all three of the macronutrients, and are sometimes higher in one than the other.

It's only fitting that you now get an explanation of each macronutrient so you have a good grip on their roles in the body and how to include them in your diet.



Protein

Protein is often regarded as the building block of muscle. If you were to gaze around a gym floor and look for the biggest, baddest, bodybuilder dude you can find, chances are he will be sucking down a protein shake at the beginning of his workout; during, at the end or perhaps all three.

You seriously don't need to go that crazy, but just know that protein IS important for muscle building. It actually works to repair damaged muscle fibers, which is what happens when you work out.

Additionally, every cell in your body from the tip of your hair follicles to the ends of your toenails is dependent on protein. It also keeps you feeling full longer and even helps boost immunity.

Proteins are made up of smaller compounds called amino acids. These are often referred to as the building blocks of protein. So you have the building blocks of protein and the building blocks of muscle. That should be easy peasy for you to remember.

Amino acids are either essential or nonessential. Essential means you need to get them from food. Non-essential means your body produces them naturally. This is important information to remember, especially if you are vegan.

Animal proteins like beef, chicken, turkey, fish and bison are all considered complete proteins because they have all the essential amino acids present. All derivatives of these foods count as well, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, milk and cottage cheese.

But don't worry if you are not a meat eater. A number of incomplete protein foods still have a high amount of protein like beans, tofu, whole grains, hemp seeds, chia seeds and nuts. Combined together these foods produce the same effect in your body as eating complete proteins.

And, uncommon to old beliefs, you do not need to eat them in the same meal. It used to be, "Make sure to eat beans and rice and whole grain bread with peanut butter" but that's not the case. As long as you supplement with these foods throughout the day, you'll be fine.

Carbohydrates

The wonderful world of carbohydrates has been destroyed more than any other food group. What a shame... Carbs are not the enemy! In fact, they are very important to the body. First and foremost, they give you energy - both physical and mental.

They are also used for fat metabolism and if you deprive yourself of carbs, your body will rely on protein for energy. This would take protein away from its duties and compromise your overall wellbeing.

Carbs are also where you find dietary fiber, which fills you up, keeps you regular and reduces the risk for cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Your goal is to always look for quality sources of carbs. And there are basically two classifications - simple and complex. You want to stick with complex. Simple carbs like white flour and white sugar products have a low nutritive value and quickly spike your blood sugar levels when consumed. This, in turn, causes a fast rise in insulin, which is a fat-storage hormone.

Complex carbs, on the other hand, cause a slow rise in blood sugar and are generally higher in vitamins, minerals and fiber. Here is a list of good sources...

- ✔ **Whole grains**
- ✔ **Whole grain bread, pasta cereal**
- ✔ **Fruits**
- ✔ **Corn, carrots, squash, yams and sweet potatoes**
- ✔ **Legumes**

Fats

Fats used to be as feared as carbs in the public eye. Why? Because the experts tried to make you believe they were evil and caused disease. In reality, fats are very good for you and necessary for hormone production, joint function, brain function and they also help insulate the body when it's cold outside.

Accumulating excess fat is not directly related to fat consumption. Weight gain occurs when you consume more calories than you burn off. This can come from all sources of macronutrients.

That being said, you still want to stick to the healthy fats, also known as unsaturated. Here is a list for you to choose from...

- ✔ **Olive, coconut, red palm, avocado, walnut and hemp oil**
- ✔ **Nuts**
- ✔ **Seeds**
- ✔ **Olives**
- ✔ **Avocados**

Crossovers

As mentioned earlier, there are a handful of foods that contain multiple macronutrients, but are dominant in one. Hopefully that didn't confuse you. For example, whole milk is often considered a good source of protein.

It generally has about 8g per 1-cup serving and it's a complete protein because it comes from a cow. However, it also contains 13g of carbs and 8g of fat. You can easily say it is a carbohydrate source instead of protein.

Beans are considered high in protein too. A cup of black beans has about 15g of protein, but 40g of carbohydrates. Although they are high in protein for a non-animal product, they are still a lot higher in carbs so they should be considered a good source of carbs instead.

The take-home message is: know that most foods have a combination of macronutrients. Take this into consideration when you are selecting foods in your diet.



Multiple Meals

It can be said that eating multiple meals a day or "grazing" is a bunch of bunk. Call it what you want, but it does make sense and it definitely is a good strategy. Eating more frequently makes it easier to cut down on calories, eat more calories, get more fiber in your diet and include more incomplete proteins if you are vegan.

Plus your energy levels will stay elevated, your hunger will be under control and your blood sugar levels will remain stable. That's a winning combination of benefits.

Your goal here is to create meals that have a balance of protein, carbs and fat, hence the term "balanced" diet that you always hear about. A solid game plan is to eat every 2 ½ to 3 hours throughout the course of the day.

To get precise with determining how many calories each meal should be, refer back to the earlier example. If you decide to eat five meals and your daily average is 1,800, each meal should be 360 calories.

7 Day Sample Meal Plan

It's time to put action to the plan. Here is a complete seven-day meal plan that consists of five meals per day. All of these meals are balanced. Feel free to adjust the calories up or down by increasing or decreasing the portion sizes. The order in which you eat these meals does not matter. Balance is the most important factor. If you feel like having an omelette in the evening, go for it! If you fancy eating salad in the morning, that's fine too.

Day 1

Meal 1	scrambled eggs, 2 c spinach, ¼ c shredded mozzarella cheese, 2 tbsp of salsa, 1 slice of sprouted whole grain toast. Mix the salsa in after you place the eggs on your plate.
Meal 2	2 whole carrots, 2 celery stalks, ½ c hummus. Chop up the carrots and celery into small pieces and dip them into the hummus.
Meal 3	Turkey sandwich. 2 slices sprouted bread, 3 slices turkey breast, 1 large slice of tomato, 3 leaves of lettuce, 1 slice of provolone cheese, 1 or 2 tbsp of mustard.
Meal 4	1 c Trail Mix. 3 c soy nuts, 2 c sunflower seeds and 1 c cranberries. Make a big batch and have it on hand for easy access.
Meal 5	1, 4-oz. baked chicken breast, 1 c steamed broccoli, 1 baked yam.

Day 2

Meal 1	½ c oatmeal, 1 c vanilla almond milk, 1 tbsp PB, 1 scoop of protein powder, few shakes of cinnamon.
Meal 2	2 hard-boiled eggs, 2 carrot sticks, 2 celery stalks and 1 apple.
Meal 3	Tuna sandwich. Add one can of chunk white, albacore tuna to a bowl with 1 tbsp pickle relish and 2 tbsp organic mayonnaise. Mix thoroughly and spread onto one slice of sprouted bread, then place the other on top. Feel free to add a few leaves of lettuce and a slice of tomato, and have some carrot and celery sticks on the side.
Meal 4	1 banana, 1 tbsp PB spread across the top.
Meal 5	1, 4-oz. baked chicken breast, 1 c steamed broccoli, 1 baked yam.

Day 3

Meal 1	2 hard-boiled eggs, 1 toasted sprouted cinnamon-raisin English muffin with 1 tbsp of coconut oil on top.
Meal 2	A 1/2 c of cottage cheese with 1/2 c of crushed pineapple and cinnamon.
Meal 3	Chicken wrap. Add a baked chicken breast, lettuce, tomato, sprouts, peppers, and any other vegetable you like. Cheese is fine too, but don't overdo it. Provolone and Swiss are good options. Drizzle honey mustard, raspberry vinaigrette, balsamic vinegar or barbecue sauce on top.
Meal 4	2 string cheese pieces wrapped in lettuce leaves with red pepper slices, cherry tomatoes, 2 celery sticks and a 1/4 c of almonds.
Meal 5	1 c lentils, 1/2 c quinoa and 1 cup of steamed cauliflower. Prepare the lentils and quinoa with a cube of vegetable broth in each or actual broth from a carton. Combine lentils and quinoa together after prepared. Sprinkle some sea salt and melt some organic butter over the top of the cauliflower if you want a little more flavor.

Day 4

Meal 1	1/2 c granola with 1/2 c Greek yogurt, 1/2 c blueberries and 1 tbsp ground flax seed.
Meal 2	Smoothie. Add 1 c of milk vanilla almond milk, 1 c of baby spinach, 1 scoop of protein powder, 1 c of frozen berries and 1 tbsp of nut butter to a blender. Add a few ice cubes and blend until smooth.
Meal 3	Spinach salad with 2 chopped hard-boiled eggs, 1/4 c cranberries, 1/4 c chopped pecans and raspberry vinaigrette dressing drizzled across the top.
Meal 4	Meal replacement bar.
Meal 5	Turkey burger on a sprouted bun with lettuce, tomato and one slice of cheese. Celery and carrot sticks on the side.

Day 5

Meal 1	1 c Greek yogurt with 1 tbsp of chopped walnuts, 1 scoop of vanilla protein powder and ½ c fresh raspberries.
Meal 2	2 strips of ready-made turkey jerky with a cucumber, 2 carrots and 2 celery stalks.
Meal 3	Bowl of beef and vegetable soup with a whole grain roll on the side.
Meal 4	Ready-to-drink meal replacement shake
Meal 5	4-oz. baked chicken breast with 1 c of quinoa and 1 c of steamed Brussels sprouts. Add salsa to the quinoa and coconut oil to the Brussels sprouts to flavor.

Day 6

Meal 1	High-fiber, high-protein meal replacement bar.
Meal 2	Smoothie with 1 c of baby spinach, 1 c of kale, 1 c of blueberries, 1 c of vanilla almond milk and a scoop of vanilla protein powder.
Meal 3	Salad with a scoop of tuna, ¼ c of diced avocado, ¼ c of raisins, 1 tbsp of hemp seeds and 1 chopped up nori sheet. Drizzle with apple cider
Meal 4	1 c cottage cheese with ¼ maple-flavored yogurt, 1 tbsp of sunflower seeds, 1 tbsp of crushed almonds, ½ c of frozen mixed berries and a pinch of cinnamon.
Meal 5	4-oz of broiled salmon with 1 c of steamed asparagus 1 c of pearly barley. Drizzle clarified butter over asparagus and barley to flavor.

Day 7

Meal 1	1 sprouted tortilla filled with 2 scrambled eggs, shredded mozzarella cheese and salsa.
Meal 2	½ c raw cashews, 1 banana
Meal 3	Sirloin patty topped with provolone cheese, steamed onions, zucchini, mushrooms and peppers. 1 c of long grain brown rice on the side.
Meal 4	½ c of hummus with raw carrots, celery, grape tomatoes and peppers.
Meal 5	4-oz of baked bison steak with 1 sweet potato and 1 c of roasted cauliflower.

Eating and Working Out

Everyone seems to have an expert opinion on meal timing and working out. In reality, there is no perfect science. It really all depends on YOUR tolerance levels and how you perform after eating. One person may be able to wolf down a turkey sandwich then go hit the weights with no trouble. You might have a bite of a banana, try to work out and experience massive stomach convulsions. The bottom line is, if you can tolerate it, go ahead and do it. But as a general rule of thumb, eat smaller amounts of food the closer it is to your workout. AND, always choose foods that are known to sit well in your belly, such as fruit, yogurt and oatmeal.

Your post-workout meal should be consumed within one hour after training. It is at this point that your muscles are like sponges and need nutrients to kickstart the rebuilding process.

Ideally you consume a quality source of protein and double the amount of carbs. For example, a shake with whey protein powder and grape juice would be a good option. In liquid form, those nutrients will be more quickly absorbed. The carbs will replenish the carbs you used for energy while working out and the protein will help repair torn muscle fibers.

When it comes to your intake, be aware that two variables stand out more than anything else. The first is your intensity and duration - call that a two-parter. It stands to reason that the more intense your work out and the longer you work out, the more calories you will need. But be aware that this will also hinge on your goals.

Naturally, if you are looking to lose weight, you'll need to be a bit more vigilant with your calories. And on the other side of the coin, if you are looking to pack on size, you will have to increase accordingly. This is just simply being aware of your situation.

The second variable is muscle mass. They say the bigger you are, the harder you fall. Well, the bigger you are, the more calories you need too. Muscle is metabolically active. That's a big reason why you want to build it. Boosting your metabolism through muscle gain will help you stay trim and look fabulous.

Daily Intake

Here is some more information about recommended ranges of macronutrients for specific goals. This can come in handy when you are trying to take away the guesswork.

You probably hear the phrase "I'm trying to bulk up" more than any other on weight room floors across the world. If you are in fact trying to "bulk up," you want to eat a little more protein as you are probably doing heavy lifting, and this will help rebuild the muscle fibers you broke down.

As a rule of thumb, aim for about 40% protein, 30% carbs and 30% fat. If you were consuming say, 3,000 calories a day, this would come out to 300g of protein, 225g of carbs and 100g of fat.

If you are trying to gain or maintain lean muscle mass, you will be better served going with 40% carbs, 30% protein and 30% fat. If you were consuming 2,000 calories a day, this would come out to 200g of carbs, 150g of protein and 67g of fat.

With weight loss, you might want to consider cutting your carb intake down to 20% in the beginning, then gradually bringing it back up to the 30% range. It's usually processed carbs that cause the most weight gain anyway.

If you reduce your overall intake and only eat quality sources, you will kickstart your weight loss. A good ratio to aim for is 50% protein, 30% fat and 20% carbs. For a 2,000 calorie diet, this would come out to 250g of protein, 67g of fat and 100g of carbs.

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Fluids

The last piece of the puzzle is fluids. Muscle is highly dependent on hydration. Don't be stupid and drink metric tons of alcohol! Keep your muscles looking and feeling good by drinking water instead. Excessive amounts of alcohol blunt testosterone levels, slow down metabolism and cause you to gain fat.

Water, on the other hand, keeps you hydrated, flushes toxins from your system and boosts your energy levels. Drink copious amounts through the day and especially in conjunction with your training.

As a basic rule of thumb, 8, 8-oz glasses a day is a good benchmark. However, it is best to increase this amount if you are doing intense bouts of exercise - especially if you are sweating heavily. In this case, aim for an additional 16oz. before training and 16oz. right after. Also sip on water while you are working out.

Summarization

How are you feeling? Are things starting to make sense? They should be. You now have a good grip on your starting point, your exercise and your diet. But no plan would be complete without information on supplementation. That being said, your Supplement Guide awaits...

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Get fit
in the Gym

lose weight in
the kitchen



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