



Healthy Eating Overview

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About Me



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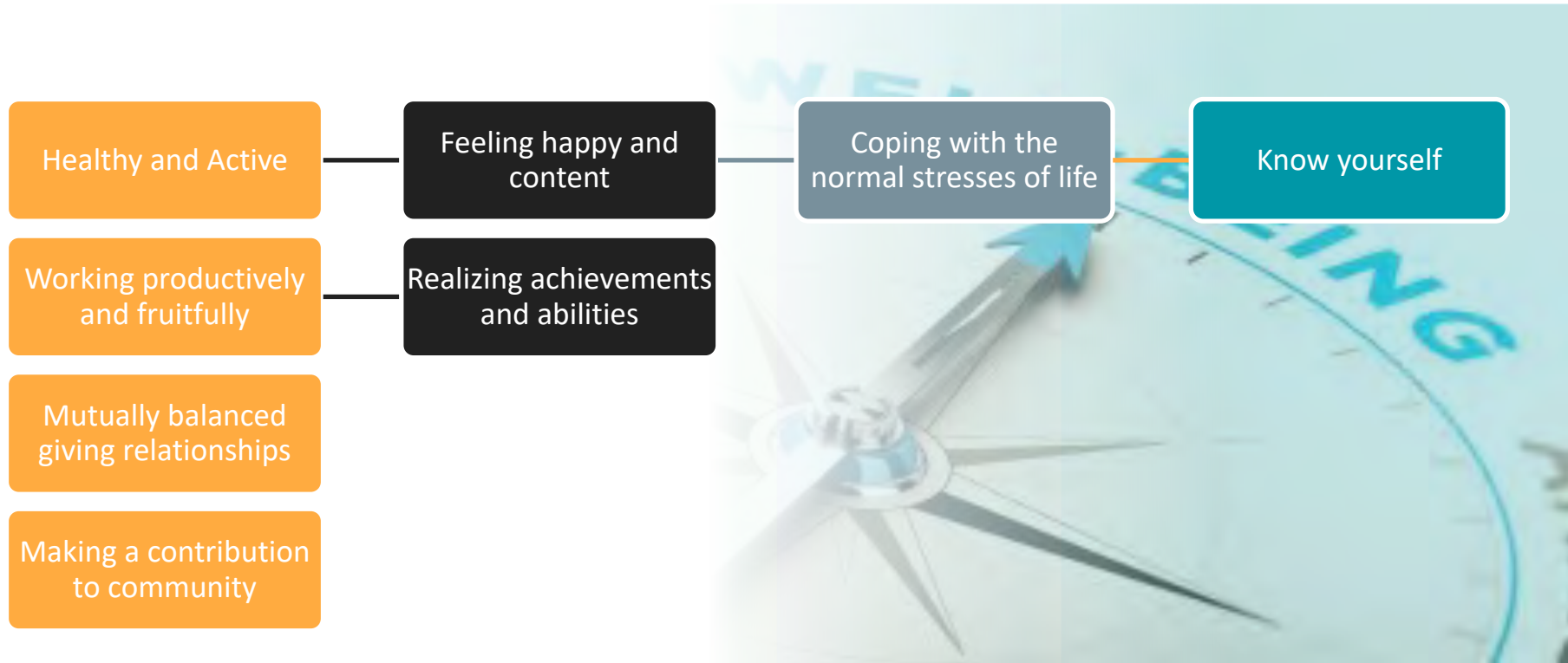


One Minute Meditation

Before we start, lets relax ...



Well-Being: Definition



Challenges

- Working Long Hours
- Irregular, Work, Personal & Eating Schedules
- Lack Of Energy & Focus
- Not Enough Time
- Not Sure Where to Start
- Information Overload
- Lack of clarity in expectations



How to “Support Yourself”

- Create a Daily Schedule / Routine
- Integrating Regular Self Care
- Deep Breathing, Relaxation & Mindfulness
- Maintaining Good Sleep Hygiene
- Regular Meal-Times & Healthy Eating
- Incorporating Movement
- Taking Breaks, Time Off & Unplugging



Healthy Lifestyle Benefits



A top-down view of a wooden table covered with a variety of fresh ingredients. In the top left, there are two brown eggs and a bowl of green leafy vegetables. Next to them are several red cherry tomatoes and a glass bottle of olive oil. On the right side, there is a piece of salmon on a parchment paper, a large piece of raw meat, and a bunch of green peas. In the center, there is a whole red apple, a yellow bell pepper, and two slices of orange. Below the apple is a whole orange pumpkin. To the left of the pumpkin is a bowl of mixed vegetables like cucumbers and carrots. In the bottom left, there are green zucchini and a small white bowl filled with almonds. In the bottom center, there are three slices of whole-grain bread, a small bowl of mixed peppercorns with a spoon, and a bunch of blueberries. On the bottom right, there are several red tomatoes, a head of garlic, and a bunch of radishes. The entire scene is set on a rustic wooden background.

Your Guide to Eating Healthy

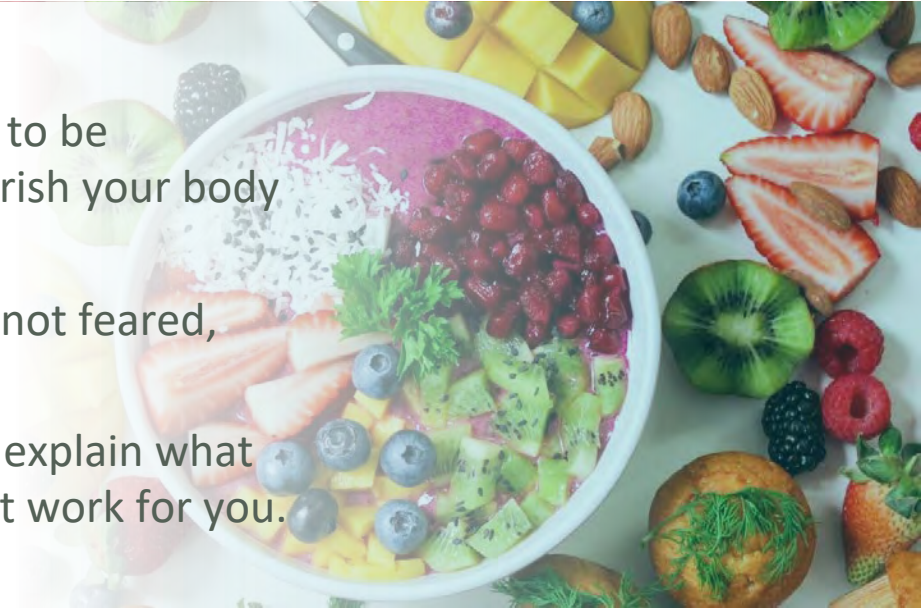
The Confusion Surrounding What to Eat

- Depending on whom you ask, “healthy eating” may take any number of forms.
- It seems that everyone, including healthcare professionals, wellness influencers, coworkers, and family members, has an opinion on the healthiest way to eat.
- Plus, nutrition articles that you read online can be downright confusing with their contradictory — and often unfounded — suggestions and rules.
- This doesn’t make it easy if you simply want to eat in a healthy way that works for you.



A Sustainable Approach to Healthy Eating

- The truth is, healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated. It's entirely possible to nourish your body while enjoying the foods you love.
- After all, food is meant to be enjoyed — not feared, counted, weighed, and tracked.
- This workshop cuts through the noise to explain what healthy eating means and how to make it work for you.



Why Does Healthy Eating Matter?

- Food is what fuels you and delivers the calories and nutrients your body needs to function.
- If your diet is deficient in calories or one or more nutrients, your health may suffer.
- If you eat too many calories, you may experience weight gain. People with obesity have an increased risk of illnesses like type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, and heart, liver, and kidney disease.
- Additionally, the quality of your diet affects your disease risk, longevity, and mental health.



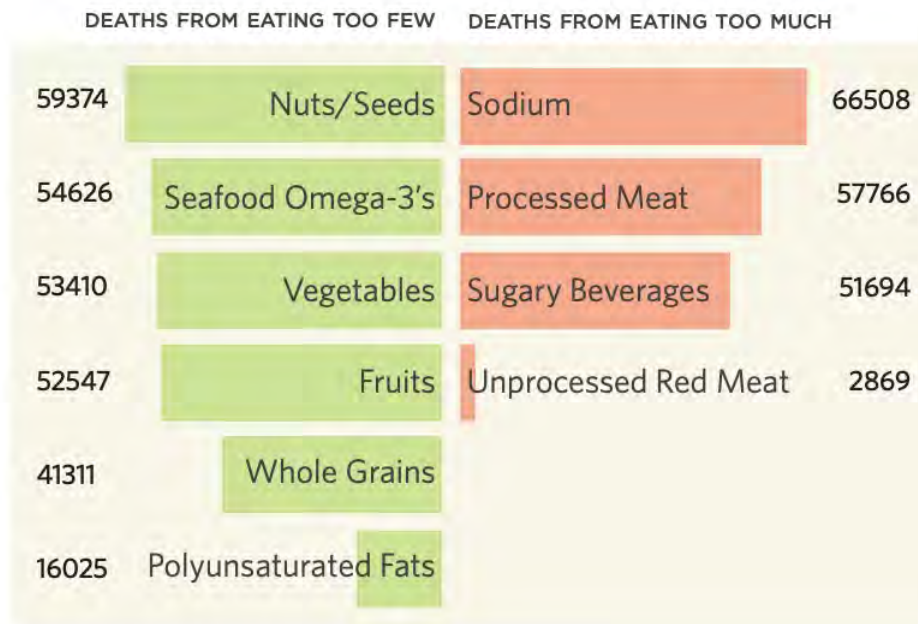
Why Does Healthy Eating Matter?

- Diets rich in highly processed foods are linked to increased mortality and a greater risk of conditions like cancer and heart disease.
- Diets high in processed foods also tend to be high in sugar, fat and salt.
- They are also lacking key whole foods such as nuts and seeds, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains



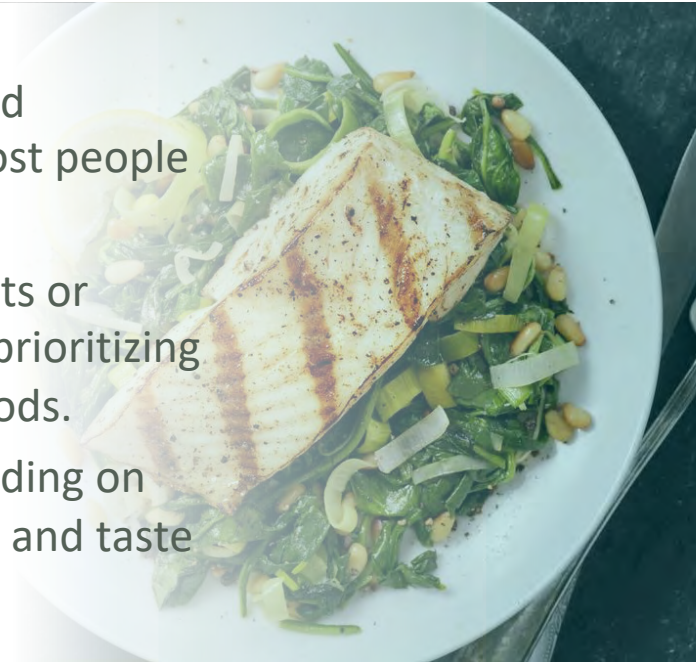
Why Does Healthy Eating Matter?

10 foods are estimated to cause nearly half of all US deaths from heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes each year.



Do You Have to Follow a Certain Diet?

- Although certain people need — or choose — to avoid particular foods or adopt diets for health reasons, most people don't have to follow any specific diet.
- Eating healthy has nothing to do with adhering to diets or certain dietary rules. “Healthy eating” simply means prioritizing your wellness by fueling your body with nutritious foods.
- The specifics may be different for each person depending on their location, financial situation, culture and society, and taste preferences.



A top-down view of various fresh ingredients including salmon, almonds, rice, vegetables, and fruits. The ingredients are arranged on a light-colored surface, with some in small bowls and others scattered. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

The Basics of Healthy Eating

Now that you know why healthy eating is important, let's cover some nutrition basics.

Nutrient Density

- When you conceptualize healthy eating, your first thought might be about calories. Even though calories are important, your primary concern should be nutrients.
- Nutrients, including **protein, carbs/fiber, fat, vitamins, and minerals**, are what your body needs to thrive. “Nutrient density” refers to the amount of nutrients in a food in relation to the calories it provides.
- All foods contain calories, but not all foods are nutrient-dense.



Diet Diversity

- Another component of healthy eating is dietary diversity, meaning eating a variety of foods.
- Following a diet that's rich in different kinds of food supports your gut bacteria, promotes a healthy body weight, and protects against chronic disease.
- Try to introduce new foods one at a time. If you don't eat many vegetables, start by adding a favorite veggie to one or two meals per day and build from there.



Macronutrients

- Macronutrients — the main nutrients you get from food — are carbs/fiber, fat, and protein.
- Your meals and snacks should be balanced between the three. Adding protein and fat to fiber-rich carb sources makes dishes more filling and tasty.
- If you're snacking on a piece of fruit, adding a spoonful of nut butter or a bit of cheese helps keep you fuller than if you were to eat the fruit alone.
- However, it's fine if your diet isn't balanced all the time.



Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range

- AMDR recommendations are as follows:
 - Carbs:** 45–65% of total calories
 - Fats:** 20–35% of total calories
 - Proteins:** 10–35% of total calories
- For example, a person who wants to obtain better blood sugar control and lose excess body fat may excel on a meal plan consisting of 35% carbs, 30% fat and 35% protein.
- Someone pursuing a ketogenic diet would need much more fat and fewer carbs, while an endurance athlete may need higher carb intake.



Macronutrient Ratios

- Counting macros and following a set macronutrient plan isn't for most people — except athletes, people seeking a specific body composition, and those who need to gain muscle or fat for medical reasons.
- Counting macros and obsessing about staying within a certain macro range may lead to an unhealthy fixation with calories or cause disordered eating tendencies.
- Some people may thrive on diets that are low in carbs and high in fat and protein — or low in fat and high in carbs. However, even on these diets, macronutrient counting typically isn't necessary.



Understanding Micronutrients

- Micronutrients are important vitamins and minerals that play key roles in your cells and organs.
- **41 Nutrients** that our bodies need everyday that also may play an important role in promoting healthy aging.
- These nutrients include **14 Known Vitamins**, including vitamins A, B-1, B-2, B-6, B-12, C, D, E, K, biotin, choline, folic acid, niacin, and pantothenate.
- **16 Essential Minerals**, including calcium, chloride, chromium, cobalt, copper, iodine, iron, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, sodium, sulfur, and zinc.
- 11 other substances that aren't currently classified as vitamins but should be that include **2 Types of Omega-3 Fatty Acids** and **9 Amino Acids**.

Highly Processed Foods

- One of the best ways to improve your diet is to cut back on ultra-processed foods.
- Highly processed products like soda, mass-produced baked goods, candy, sugary cereals, and certain boxed snack food contain little if any whole food ingredients.
- These items tend to pack ingredients like high fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, and artificial sweeteners.



GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
Unprocessed/ minimally processed	Processed culinary ingredients	Processed foods	Ultra-processed foods
<p>Foods unaltered or altered by processes such as removing inedible parts, drying, grinding, cooking, pasteurization, freezing, or non-alcoholic fermentation. No substances are added. Processing aims to increase food stability and enable easier or more diverse preparation.</p> <p><i>Examples: Fresh or frozen fruits/vegetables, pulses, packaged grains, flours, nuts, plain pasta, pasteurized milk, chilled/frozen meat</i></p>	<p>Substances obtained directly from Group 1 foods or from nature, created by industrial processes such as pressing, centrifuging, refining, extracting or mining. Processing aims to create products to be used in preparation, seasoning and cooking of Group 1 foods.</p> <p><i>Examples: Butter, vegetable oils, other fats, sugar, molasses, honey, salt</i></p>	<p>Products made by adding edible substances from Group 2 to Group 1 foods using preservation methods such as non-alcoholic fermentation, canning, or bottling. Processing aims to increase stability and durability of Group 1 foods and to make them more enjoyable.</p> <p><i>Examples: Canned vegetables in brine, freshly made breads or cheeses, cured meats</i></p>	<p>Formulations of low-cost substances derived from Group 1 foods with little to no whole foods; always contain edible substances not used in home kitchens (e.g., protein isolates) and/or cosmetic additives (e.g., flavors, colors, emulsifiers). Processing involves multiple steps and industries and aims to create products liable to replace all other NOVA groups.</p> <p><i>Examples: Packaged snacks, cookies/biscuits, instant soups/noodles, ready-to-eat/heat meals, candy, soft drinks</i></p>

UPFs are not simply foods that have been modified by processing, but rather edible products formulated from food-derived substances, along with additives that heighten their appeal and durability. UPFs are designed and manufactured for maximum profit: they contain low-cost ingredients, have long shelf-lives, are hyper-palatable, and are highly branded and marketed to consumers. They are typically calorie-dense and high in free sugars, refined starches, unhealthy fats, and sodium.¹⁷ Scholars are increasingly recognizing and calling attention to the addictive qualities of UPFs.^{10-12,18-20}

Make Healthy Eating Work for You

- Food is one of the many puzzle pieces of your life. It may even be last on your list of concerns.
- Following a healthier diet means making food one of your priorities.
- This doesn't mean that you have to spend hours meal prepping or cooking elaborate meals, but it does require some thought and effort, especially if your schedule is busy.
- Going to the grocery store once or twice per week will help ensure that you have healthy choices.
- A well-stocked kitchen makes choosing healthy meals and snacks much easier.

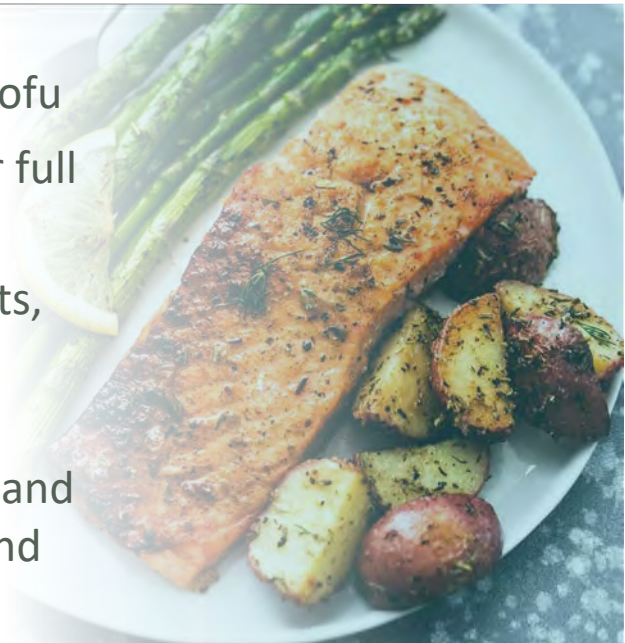


Plan Your Meals

If you're drawing a blank, keep it simple and think in threes:

1. **Protein:** eggs, chicken, fish, or a plant-based option like tofu
2. **Fat:** olive oil, nuts, seeds, nut butter, avocado, cheese, or full fat yogurt
3. **Fiber-Rich Carbs:** starchy options like sweet potatoes, oats, certain fruits, and beans — or low carb fiber sources like asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, and berries

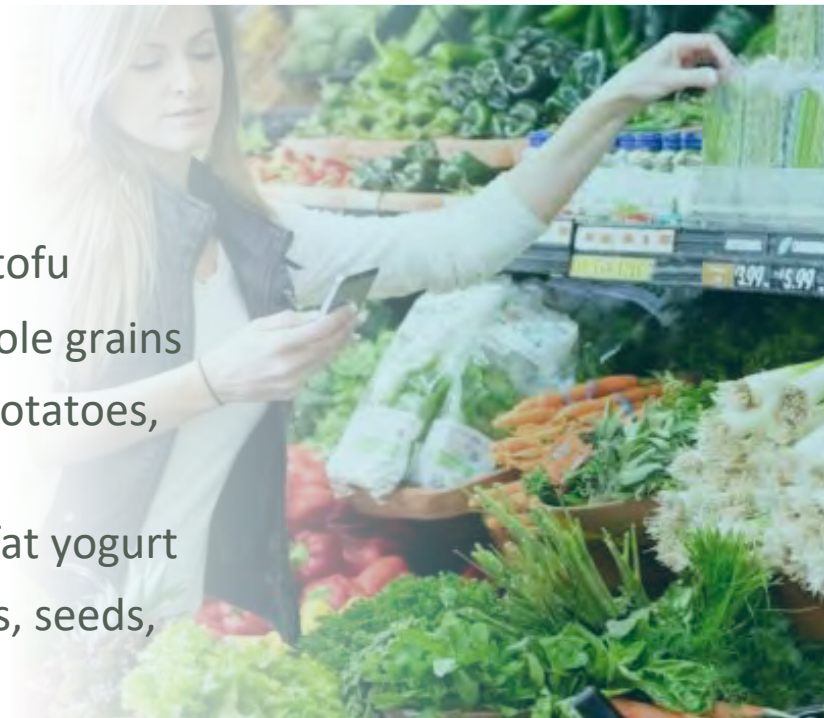
Example: Breakfast - spinach and egg scramble with avocado and berries; **Lunch** - a sweet potato stuffed with veggies, beans, and shredded chicken; **Dinner** a salmon filet or baked tofu with sautéed broccoli and brown rice.



Plan for Grocery Shopping

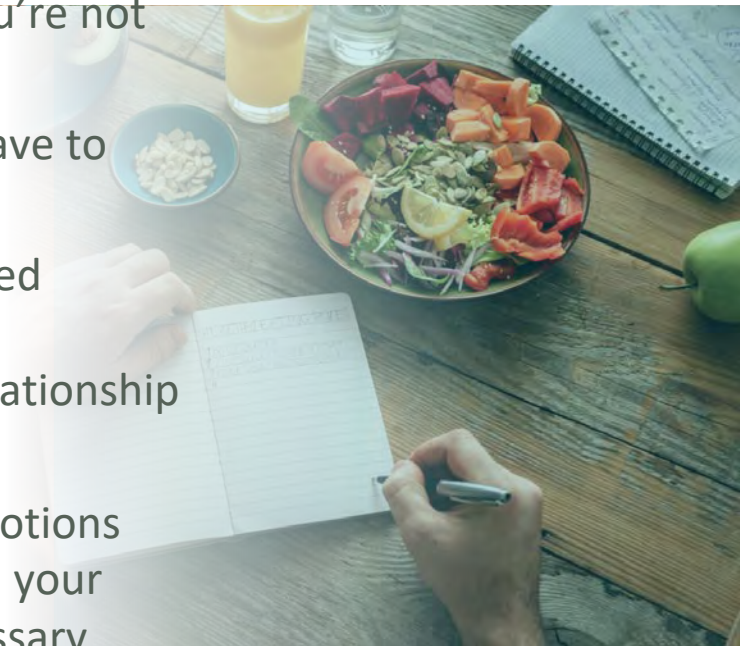
When Grocery Shopping, Stock Up On:

- Fresh and frozen fruits and veggies
- Protein sources like chicken, eggs, fish, and tofu
- Bulk carb sources like canned beans and whole grains
- Starchy veggies like white potatoes, sweet potatoes, and butternut squash
- Fat sources like avocados, olive oil, and full fat yogurt
- Nutritious, simple snack ingredients like nuts, seeds, nut butter, hummus, olives, and dried fruit



Develop a Healthy Relationship with Food

- If you don't have a good relationship with food, you're not alone.
- To develop a healthy relationship with food, you have to have the right tools.
- Working with a healthcare team, such as a registered dietitian and psychologist who specializes in eating disorders, is the best way to start mending your relationship with food.
- Food restrictions, fad dieting, and self-prescribed notions like “getting back on track” won't help. Working on your relationship with food may take time, but it's necessary.



A top-down view of a healthy meal preparation on a white wooden surface. In the center is a white ceramic dish containing two pieces of salmon, several florets of broccoli, and several cherry tomatoes. To the left of the dish, there is a yellow lemon half, a glass pitcher of oil, and a small bowl of mixed spices. The text is overlaid on the image.

Tips for Eating Healthy in the Real World

Here are some realistic tips for you to get started with healthy eating:

Eating Healthy in the Real World

1

Prioritize Plant Based Foods - Plant foods like veggies, fruits, beans, and nuts should make up the majority of your diet. Try incorporating these foods, especially veggies and fruits, at every meal and snack.

2

Cook at Home - Cooking meals at home helps diversify your diet. If you're used to takeout or restaurant meals, try cooking just one or two meals per week to start.



Eating Healthy in the Real World

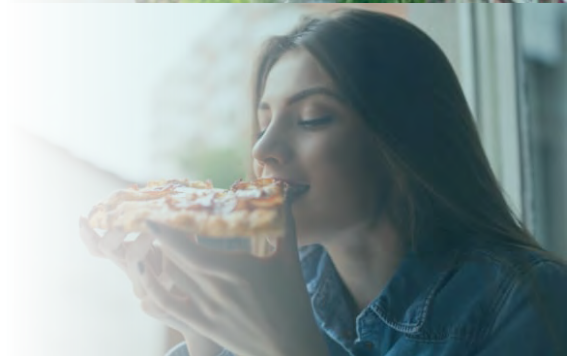
3

Shop for Groceries Regularly - If your kitchen is stocked with healthy foods, you're more likely to make healthy meals and snacks. Go on one or two grocery runs per week to keep nutritious ingredients on hand.



4

Understand Your Diet Isn't Going to Be Perfect: Progress — not perfection — is key. Meet yourself where you are. If you're currently eating out every night, cooking one homemade, veggie-packed meal per week is significant progress.



Eating Healthy in the Real World

5

Cheat Days Aren't Acceptable - If your current diet includes “cheat days” or “cheat meals,” this is a sign of an unbalanced diet. Once you learn that all foods can be a part of a healthy diet, there's no need for cheating.

6

Cut Out Sugar Sweetened Beverages - Limit sugary beverages like soda, energy drinks, and sweetened coffees as much as possible. Regularly consuming sugary beverages may harm your health.



Eating Healthy in the Real World

7

Choose Filling Foods - When you're hungry, your goal should be to eat filling, nutritious foods, not to eat as few calories as possible. Pick protein- and fiber-rich meals and snacks that are sure to fill you up.

8

Eat Whole Foods - A healthy eating pattern should be primarily composed of whole foods like vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and protein sources like eggs and fish.



Eating Healthy in the Real World

9

Hydrate the Smart Way – Staying hydrated is part of healthy eating, and water is the best way to stay hydrated. If you're not used to drinking water, get a reusable water bottle and add fruit slices or a squeeze of lemon for flavor.



10

Honor Your Dislikes - If you've tried a specific food several times and don't like it, don't eat it. There are plenty of healthy foods to choose instead. Don't force yourself to eat something just because it's considered healthy.



Summary

A top-down view of a wooden table with a bowl of quinoa salad and a halved avocado. The salad contains quinoa, sliced avocado, cherry tomatoes, purple cabbage, and green onions. The background is a light-colored wooden surface.

- Tips like cooking at home, grocery shopping, eating a lot of plant foods, choosing filling meals and snacks, and honoring your dislikes can help you create and maintain a healthy eating pattern.
- You can also work with a nutrition health professional, especially if you're not sure how to start improving your diet. A dietitian can help you develop a sustainable, nutritious eating plan that works for your needs and schedule.

Next Steps

- What is the Easiest Next Step You Can Take to Support Better Balance in Your Life?
- What Is The Easiest Next Step You Can Take To Support Your Health?
- Focus On This Step Until It Feels Like A New Habit
- Pick A Next Step To Take



**THANKS FOR INVESTING THE
TIME TO SPEAK TODAY**

ANY QUESTIONS?



**FLURISH
WELLNESS**

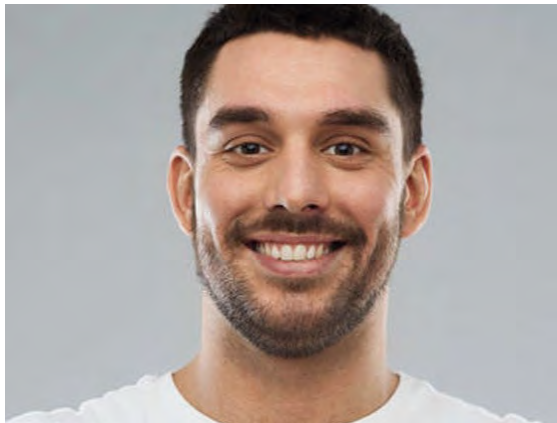
HAPPY HEALTHY LIVING



Physical Wellness: The forefront of any wellness regimen and encompasses everything from physical activity level and the nutritional value of your diet to the quality of your sleep. Optimal physical wellness directly impacts the way you think and feel.



Mental & Emotional Wellness: Covers everything from mental health and self-esteem to intimacy and the healthy expression of emotions. As humans, we possess a complex set of emotions that equip us for connecting with others, living with a sense of morality, and acting as functional members of society.



Spiritual Wellness: Productive and healthy individuals seek meaning and purpose to nourish their lives. Spiritual wellness encompasses this idea, encouraging you to live by a guiding set of principles and belief systems that can help you approach life with a positive mind-set.



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HOW TO COUNT MACROS – A Step-by-Step Guide

If you belong to a gym or tune in to the health community, chances are you've heard the term "counting macros."

Popularly used by people looking to shed weight or gain muscle mass, counting macronutrients (macros) can help you reach various health goals.

It entails keeping track of the calories and types of foods you eat in order to achieve certain macronutrient and calorie goals.

Though counting macros is relatively simple, it can be confusing if you're just starting out.

This article explains the benefits of counting macros and provides a step-by-step guide on how to get started.

WHAT ARE MACRONUTRIENTS

In order to successfully count macronutrients, it's important to know what they are and why some people need different macronutrient ratios than others.

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates include sugars, starches and fibers.

Most types of carbs get broken down into glucose, or blood sugar, which your body either uses for immediate energy or stores as glycogen — the storage form of glucose — in your liver and muscles.

Carbs provide 4 calories per gram and typically make up the largest portion of people's calorie intake.

Carb intake is among the most hotly debated of all macronutrient recommendations, but major health organizations suggest consuming 45–65% of your daily calories from carbs.

Carbohydrates are found in foods like grains, starchy vegetables, beans, dairy products and fruits.

FATS

Fats have the most calories of all macronutrients, providing 9 calories per gram.

Your body needs fat for energy and critical functions, such as hormone production, nutrient absorption and body temperature maintenance.

Though typical macronutrient recommendations for fats range from 20–35% of total calories, many people find success following a diet higher in fat.

Fats are found in foods like oils, butter, avocado, nuts, meat and fatty fish.

PROTEINS

Like carbs, proteins provide 4 calories per gram.

Proteins are vital for processes like cell signaling, immune function and the building of tissues, hormones and enzymes.

It's recommended that proteins comprise 10–35% of your total calorie intake.

However, protein recommendations vary depending on body composition goals, age, health and more.

Examples of protein-rich foods include eggs, poultry, fish, tofu and lentils.

HOW TO COUNT THEM

Learning how to count macronutrients does take some effort, but it's a method that anyone can use.

The following steps will get you started.

1. FIGURE OUT YOUR CALORIE NEEDS

In order to calculate your overall calorie needs, you need to determine resting energy expenditure (REE) and non-resting energy expenditure (NREE).

REE refers to the number of calories a person burns at rest, while NREE indicates calories burned during activity and digestion.

Adding REE and NREE gives you the total number of calories burned in a day, also known as total daily energy expenditure (TDEE).

In order to determine your overall calorie needs, you can either use a simple online calculator or the Mifflin-St. Jeor equation:

- **Men:** calories/day = $10 \times \text{weight (kg)} + 6.25 \times \text{height (cm)} - 5 \times \text{age (y)} + 5$
- **Women:** calories/day = $10 \times \text{weight (kg)} + 6.25 \times \text{height (cm)} - 5 \times \text{age (y)} - 161$

Then, multiply your result by an activity factor — a number that represents different levels of activity:

- **Sedentary:** x 1.2 (limited exercise)
- **Lightly active:** x 1.375 (light exercise less than three days per week)
- **Moderately active:** x 1.55 (moderate exercise most days of the week)
- **Very active:** x 1.725 (hard exercise every day)
- **Extra active:** x 1.9 (strenuous exercise two or more times per day)

The end result gives you your TDEE.

Calories can either be added or subtracted from your total expenditure in order to reach different goals.

In other words, those trying to lose weight should consume fewer calories than they expend, while those looking to gain muscle mass should increase calories.

2. DECIDE YOUR IDEAL MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

After determining how many calories to consume each day, the next step is to decide what macronutrient ratio works best for you.

Typical macronutrient recommendations are as follows:

- **Carbs:** 45–65% of total calories
- **Fats:** 20–35% of total calories
- **Proteins:** 10–35% of total calories

Keep in mind that these recommendations may not fit your specific needs.

Keep in mind that these recommendations may not fit your specific needs.

Your ratio can be fine-tuned in order to achieve specific objectives.

For example, a person who wants to obtain better blood sugar control and lose excess body fat may excel on a meal plan consisting of 35% carbs, 30% fat and 35% protein.

Someone pursuing a ketogenic diet would need much more fat and fewer carbs, while an endurance athlete may need higher carb intake.

As you can see, macronutrient ratios can vary depending on dietary preferences, weight loss goals and other factors.

3. TRACK YOUR MACROS AND CALORIE INTAKE

Next, it's time to start tracking your macros.

The term "tracking macros" simply means logging the foods you eat on a website, app or food journal.

The most convenient way to track macros may be through an app like MyFitnessPal, Lose It! or My Macros +.

These apps are user-friendly and specifically designed to simplify tracking macros.

In addition, a digital food scale may help you track your macros — though it isn't necessary. If you invest in one, weigh each food item you eat before logging it into your app of choice.

Several apps feature a barcode scanner that automatically inputs a serving of a scanned food into your macro log.

You can also hand-write macros into a physical journal. The method depends on your individual preference.

Keep in mind that it's not necessary to hit your macro targets exactly. You can still meet your goals even if you go a few grams over or under each day.

4. COUNTING EXAMPLE

Here's an example of how to calculate macronutrients for a 2,000-calorie diet consisting of 40% carbs, 30% protein and 30% fat.

CARBS:

- 4 calories per gram
- 40% of 2,000 calories = 800 calories of carbs per day
- Total grams of carbs allowed per day = $800/4 = 200$ grams

PROTEINS:

- 4 calories per gram
- 30% of 2,000 calories = 600 calories of protein per day
- Total grams of protein allowed per day = $600/4 = 150$ grams

FATS:

- 9 calories per gram
- 30% of 2,000 calories = 600 calories of protein per day
- Total grams of fat allowed per day = $600/9 = 67$ grams

In this scenario, your ideal daily intake would be 200 grams of carbs, 150 grams of protein and 67 grams of fat.

BENEFITS

Macronutrient counting may provide several benefits.

MAY IMPROVE DIET QUALITY

Counting macros can focus your attention on food quality rather than calorie content.

For example, a bowl of sugary cereal may have a similar number of calories as a bowl of oats topped with berries and pumpkin seeds, but these meals vary widely in macronutrient content.

Counting macros may lead you to choose healthier, nutrient-dense food in order to fulfill set macronutrient ranges.

However, unhealthy foods may still fit into your macros and calories — so it's important to make healthy food a priority.

MAY PROMOTE WEIGHT LOSS

Counting macros may be particularly effective for weight loss because it sets out specific dietary recommendations.

For instance, tracking macros can help those following high-protein, low-carb diets, which are linked to weight loss.

Plus, research shows that tracking food intake may aid long-term weight maintenance.

MAY ASSIST WITH SPECIFIC GOALS

Macronutrient counting is popular among athletes and those with specific health goals other than weight loss.

Anyone looking to build muscle mass may have greater protein needs than people simply looking to drop excess body fat.

Counting macros is essential for people who need to consume specific amounts of macronutrients in order to boost performance and gain lean body mass.

For example, research shows that resistance-trained athletes may need as much as 1.4 grams of protein per pound (3.1 grams per kg) of body weight per day to maintain muscle mass.

Counting macros may ensure that your macronutrient needs are being met.

NOT FOR EVERYONE

People who thrive on structure may find that counting macros is ideal for their health goals.

Counting macros can increase your awareness of the quality and amount of food you are consuming.

Plus, it may be a good tool for those following ketogenic or high-protein diets.

That said, counting macros isn't for everyone.

Because macro counting puts so much emphasis on tracking calories and logging intake, anyone with a history of eating disorders should steer clear of counting macros.

Focusing on food intake this intently could even lead to disordered eating patterns in those without a history of these behaviors.

Keep in mind that it's also possible to eat poorly while engaging in macro counting because it permits all foods as long as the item fits into set macronutrient ranges.

Those using macro counting should aim — depending on their goals — to follow a whole-foods diet rich in fresh produce, healthy fats, complex carbs and protein sources.

IN SUMMARY

When first counting macros, it's easy to feel overwhelmed.

However, following the steps above can streamline the process and set you up for success.

The most important steps in counting macros are setting a calorie goal and macronutrient range for carbs, protein and fat that works best for you.

Then, log your food intake and aim to stay within your macros by eating a diet rich in fresh produce, healthy fats, complex carbs and protein sources.

Before you know it, counting macros will feel natural.

NUTRITION GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Eating nutritiously means making choices that support your health. While it's important to consider quality nutrients, personal preferences are also important. In short, eating should be both nourishing *and* enjoyable.

Whether you're cooking at home, ordering in, or eating out, you can empower yourself to learn some basics, get creative, and explore what aligns with your current preferences, circumstances, and health goals.

COOKING AND MEAL PREP

Nourishing yourself confidently in the kitchen can be a lot of fun. Cooking often requires some knowledge, creativity, and planning, but you don't need to spend hours making lengthy shopping lists, preparing complicated ingredients, and juggling multiple recipes.

TIPS

1| Keep it simple and reduce stress.

Keeping it simple increases the odds that you'll find time to cook. Here are a few ideas for stress-free cooking:

- Use canned or frozen vegetables if you're short on chopping time.
- Shop for ready-to-go items during busy weeks – for example, pre-diced vegetables, steamable grain pouches, and rotisserie chicken.
- Look for recipes with five ingredients or less. Save gourmet dishes for special occasions.

2| Consider nutrients.

Include a variety of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats on your weekly grocery list. Including these macronutrients, along with plenty of fiber, will provide health-supporting balance to meals. It will also help you stay full longer and prevent blood sugar spikes and crashes.

3| Learn what you like.

One barrier to healthful eating is that people claim they don't enjoy eating vegetables or other nutrient-rich foods. With a little creativity and flexible thinking, you can transform recipes to use the foods you do enjoy eating. For example, consider foods in the same general "food family." If a recipe calls for quinoa, but you prefer rice, swap it out! If you're not a fan of kale, try spinach instead.

4| Invest in kitchen tools over time.

You don't need to rush out and buy lots of fancy kitchen gadgets. Take note of what you have and what might simplify your cooking routine. For example, a food processor can save you time dicing veggies and can be used to blend sauces, dips, and soups.

5| Make it fun.

Think of meal prep as self-care time or an opportunity to bond with others. Listen to your favorite podcast while dicing vegetables or invite a family member to help you in the kitchen.

6| Prep ingredients instead of meals.

You're more likely to throw together a healthy meal when it's already been prepped and seasoned. For example, prepare for the week on Sunday by grilling a pound of chicken, cooking a box of quinoa, and roasting two pans of vegetables with one swirl of healthy oil, seasoned to taste. Store each component in separate glass food storage containers in the refrigerator. Now you have large containers of ingredients ready to mix and match throughout the week to keep things interesting!

Some options to spice things up: Add salsa and avocado for a Mexican twist or fresh basil with lemon juice and olive oil for something Italian. At the end of the week, take your leftover roasted vegetables and protein and add some broth to simmer for a delicious soup.

7| Reuse ingredients to make multiple meals.

Prepare more food than you think you'll need at once and repurpose the leftovers in different ways. Leftovers are more exciting – and might appeal to more people – with a few updates and additions.

RECIPES

Recycled Recipes

Read on for a few examples of how you might reuse the same ingredients to make multiple meals.

Note: Feel free to swap proteins – try a plant-based protein, like beans or tempeh.

Meal 1: Chickpea Pasta with Chicken, Asparagus, and Zucchini

Imagine you roasted chicken, asparagus, and zucchini and cooked a box of chickpea pasta for dinner one night. What could you do with the leftovers? Here are some ideas:

ASPARAGUS PEA PASTA

 Serves: 2

Ingredients

- 1 cup plant-based pasta, such as chickpea or lentil
- 1 tablespoon butter or ghee
- 1/2 medium onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 cups asparagus, sliced into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta
- 2 tablespoons chopped dill
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Prepare pasta as directed.
2. While pasta is cooking, heat a large pan over medium heat. Add butter, onion, and garlic. Cook until onions are soft, about 3–4 minutes.
3. Add asparagus and cook for another 2 minutes.
4. Add peas and cook until they're warm, about 2 minutes. Set aside.
5. Drain pasta and add it to pan with vegetables. Add feta, dill, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Toss until well combined.

ZUCCHINI SALAD WITH CHICKEN

 Serves: 2

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dill
- 2 zucchini, trimmed
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup asparagus
- 4 ounces chicken
- 1/4 cup feta

Directions

1. Prepare dressing by whisking together olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, mustard, lemon juice, and dill.
2. Use spiral cutter or vegetable peeler to create long, thin zucchini “noodles.” Pat dry with a clean towel.
3. Add zucchini, onion, tomatoes, and asparagus to bowl. Top with chicken and feta.
4. Pour dressing over top when ready to serve.

Meal 2: Steak with Southwestern Salad

Imagine you prepared a skillet steak and served it with a Southwestern salad (featuring avocado, bell peppers, corn, and Roma tomatoes) and homemade baked tortilla chips (using store-bought tortillas). You planned ahead to buy and prepare more than was needed for this special meal, so you could use it for lunch the next day.

EASY BEEF FAJITAS

 Serves: 2

Ingredients

- 1/2 pound sliced beef round or sirloin steaks
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced
- 2 large bell peppers
- 2 Roma tomatoes
- 3/4 cup Mexican blend cheese
- Sliced avocado to top

For fajita seasoning:

- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Mix ingredients for fajita seasoning in bowl. Stir until well combined and set aside.
2. Slice beef into thin strips. Season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
3. Heat large skillet to high. Coat with cooking spray.
4. Add half the beef and half the fajita seasoning. Cook for 1 minute. Flip beef and cook for an additional minute. Repeat until beef is cooked and seasoned. Set beef aside.
5. Return skillet to heat and add oil. Add onions, bell peppers, salt, and pepper. Cook until soft, about 5–7 minutes.
6. Return beef to pan, add tomatoes, and toss. Cook for 2–3 minutes. Sprinkle cheese over top. Cover and cook for 5–7 minutes, or until cheese melts. Top with avocado.

Go-To Recipes

Expanding culinary creativity doesn't have to be difficult. In fact, there are many healthy and simple strategies for preparing a variety of foods.

Check out some of our favorite simple recipes for preparing vegetables, grains, legumes, and protein. Use the [IIN plate method](#) as a general guide – 50% fruits and vegetables, 25% starches or grains, 25% protein, and a serving of healthy fat or oil – and play around to build your own healthy meal!

VEGETABLES

SIMPLE VEGETABLE STEAM

Directions

1. Dice vegetables.
2. Heat 2–3 tablespoons of broth per pound of vegetables in a skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Once broth begins to steam, add vegetables (along with garlic or any spices you wish), cover, and cook for 5–7 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Add flavor to your vegetables any way you wish! Try a drizzle of olive oil, fresh lemon or lime juice, tamari, nutritional yeast, or parmesan.

Tip: This option works well for most vegetables, although heartier choices (such as beets and potatoes) may need to steam much longer to achieve tenderness. You'll likely need to add more broth as well.

ROASTED VEGETABLES

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Uniformly dice vegetables and toss with oil and spices.
3. Place mixture in single layer on rimmed baking sheet. (You may want to line it with parchment paper.)
4. Roast for 30–45 minutes. (Some vegetables will cook more quickly than others – e.g., broccoli roasts faster than beets – so take the faster-cooking vegetables out of the oven earlier.)

Tip: Roasting is an easy way to bring out the natural sweetness of vegetables.

EASY GREENS PESTO

Ingredients

- 4–5 cups of raw greens (any combination of kale, spinach, and herbs)
- 3/4 cup nuts (walnuts, pecans, cashews, etc.)
- 1 cup shredded cheese or nutritional yeast
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- Other spices of your choice

Directions

1. Blend in large food processor until uniform.

Tip: Pesto is delicious as a dip or a pizza, pasta, or sandwich topping.

GRAINS AND LEGUMES

GRAIN PILAF

Directions

1. Rinse grains well until water runs clear.
2. In a pan, bring broth to a boil.
3. Add grains plus your favorite spices and return to a boil.
4. Reduce heat, cover with tight-fitting lid, and let simmer as indicated.
5. Once water is absorbed, remove from heat, let sit for five minutes, then fluff grains with fork.
6. Mix and match your favorite ingredients to create an interesting pilaf. Try diced herbs, diced carrots, dried fruit, nuts, peas, or sautéed onions.

Tip: The grain-to-water ratio and cooking time may vary depending on the grain. Here are the ratios and cooking times for barley, brown rice, and millet:

- Barley (pearled): 2 cups liquid per 1 cup grain; simmer 40–50 minutes
- Brown rice: 2.5 cups liquid per 1 cup grain; simmer 40–50 minutes
- Millet: 2 cups liquid per 1 cup grain; simmer 20–25 minutes

GUT-FRIENDLY BEANS

Directions

1. Rinse beans well and soak in water overnight.
2. The next day, drain soaking water. Add beans and fresh water or broth (3 cups liquid to 1 cup beans) to a large pot.
3. Before boiling, add digestion boosters – a strip of kombu seaweed, bay leaves, fresh ginger slices, fennel seeds, and/or cumin seeds – to pot.
4. Cover and bring beans to a boil.
5. Reduce to a simmer and tilt lid to allow steam to escape.
6. Cook beans until tender (1–1.5 hours).
7. Cool beans in cooking liquid and transfer, along with liquid, to storage container.

Tip: While tasty, beans aren't always friendly to the digestive tract. Soaking them overnight will help eliminate the chemical that can cause bloating or gas.

HOMEMADE HUMMUS

Ingredients

- 1 can beans (or 1.5 cups cooked beans/lentils)
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 cup tahini (sesame seed paste) (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Spices (such as black pepper, cumin, paprika, turmeric, etc.)

Directions

1. Blend all ingredients in food processor until creamy.
2. Add a few tablespoons of water to thin out if needed.

Tip: Hummus makes a delicious pizza or sandwich topping and can be made into a “sauce” by adding extra olive oil or water. While traditionally made with garbanzo beans, you can add variety by using any type of bean or lentil you like. You can also add nuts.

OVERNIGHT OATS

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup instant oats
- 1/2 cup milk of your choice
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1/2 cup fruit
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon (and other spices you enjoy)

Directions

1. Add oats to large Tupperware or mason jar.
2. Add milk and chia seeds and mix well.
3. Add fruit and spices and mix again.
4. Place mixture in fridge and enjoy the next morning. You can heat up the oats or eat them cold. Consider varying the fruit and top with your favorite nut butter.

Tip: This idea lets your breakfast “cook” overnight.

ANIMAL-BASED PROTEIN

BROILED CHICKEN BREASTS

Directions

1. Season chicken with fresh lemon juice and spices of your choice.
2. Preheat broiler on high and put a stainless-steel skillet or cast-iron pan six inches away from the heat.
3. Add chicken to hot pan (skin side up) and cook until internal temperature reaches 165°F–175°F, approximately 7 minutes. (Larger pieces may take longer.)
4. Remove from heat and add extra flavor with fresh herbs, salsa, or sauce.

Tip: Keeping the skin on will maintain moisture.

FISH BAKE

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. On a sheet of parchment paper (about 18 inches), add one fish fillet and seasonings of your choice (fresh herbs, orange slices, spices, and/or small diced vegetables).
3. Fold paper over fish and seasonings and crimp edges together to seal.
4. Bake for 15 minutes per inch of fish thickness, until internal temperature reaches a minimum of 145°F.
5. Remove fish from oven and serve in or out of packet.

Tip: Baking fish in parchment paper steams it in its own juices and prevents overcooking.

STOVETOP FRITTATA

Ingredients

- 2 cups diced vegetables of your choice
- 8 eggs
- 2 teaspoons oil (avocado or coconut are good options for higher-heat cooking)
- Broth
- Spices of your choice (sea salt, pepper, cayenne, turmeric, garlic)

Directions

1. In an 8-inch nonstick skillet or well-seasoned cast-iron pan, sauté vegetables in oil. Set aside.
2. In a bowl, beat eggs, broth, and spices together quickly.
Note: If you wish to add cheese, herbs, or greens, stir them into the egg mixture now.
3. Add a little oil to pan. Pour eggs onto hot skillet and spread cooked vegetables evenly on top.
4. Cook for about 8 minutes, until eggs are almost set.
5. Cover skillet and cook for another 5 minutes or so, until eggs are firm.
6. Cool and cut into triangles.

Tip: Frittatas are a classic and creative way to enjoy eggs.

EATING OUT AND ORDERING IN

Whether you forgot to meal prep, aren't a confident or motivated chef, or are too exhausted to cook after a long day, rest assured it's possible to enjoy eating out or ordering in while making choices that support health. Though restaurants often sneak extra fat, salt, and sugar into meals, you can empower yourself to make menu selections that don't sacrifice taste or nutrition.

Your wellness goals are unique to you, and circumstances continually change, so choose ideas that work for you right now.

TIPS

1| Look closely at menu wording. Here are some helpful guidelines:

- Richer menu items, such as those fried and/or higher in salt or unhealthy fat, are often associated with words like *alfredo*, *au gratin*, *battered*, *breaded*, *creamy*, *crispy*, *crunchy*, *fried*, *fritters*, *loaded*, *pan-fried*, *smothered*, or *tempura*.
- Menu items high in added sugar are often described as *barbecue*, *glazed*, *honey-dipped*, *maple*, *sticky*, or *teriyaki*.
- Lighter and leaner menu items might be featured as *baked*, *broiled*, *broth-based*, *grilled*, *poached*, *sautéed*, or *steamed*.

2| Fill up on non-starchy vegetables.

- Aim to fill half your order with brightly colored, non-starchy vegetables, including broccoli, beets, bell peppers, carrots, leafy greens, and zucchini. These vegetables are lower in carbohydrates and rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients.

3| Keep animal-based protein portions in check.

- Take a peek at the size of your palm – it’s about the same size as one protein serving (three ounces). Use this visual to estimate the number of servings provided in your meal.

4| Opt for high-fiber starches. Here are some ideas:

- Choose whole-grain bread over refined white bread for sandwiches. Whole-grain or whole-wheat pastas, pizza crusts, tortillas, or wraps may be available, too.
- Try brown rice instead of white rice.
- Consider nutrient-dense grains, such as barley, quinoa, or millet, if available.
- Include starchy vegetables instead of refined grains at your meal. Examples include potatoes, sweet potatoes, or winter squash.

5| Don’t be afraid to make requests and substitutions. Here are some suggestions:

- Swap out your meal’s listed sides for nutrient-dense or lighter options (e.g., roasted vegetables instead of macaroni and cheese). “Off-menu” items might be available, too – just ask!
- Opt for lighter sauces rather than creamy ones, or leave them off altogether. Add extra herbs or spices for flavor.
- Ask for butter, dressings, and sauces on the side so you can more easily monitor how much you’re eating.
- Ask if your dish can be prepared using an alternate cooking method, such as grilled or sautéed instead of fried.

6| Portion your meal.

- Eating out and ordering in healthfully doesn't mean completely depriving yourself. However, being mindful and listening to your body's fullness cues can leave you satisfied rather than uncomfortably stuffed.

Here are some tips:

- If you choose a heavier meal at a restaurant, plan to take home leftovers.
- If you order takeout, put half the meal into a different container to save for another time.
- Split a dish with someone.
- Order two appetizers instead of an entrée.

NUTRITION GUIDE BY CUISINE

Check out the chart below for nutrition considerations by cuisine.

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add extra vegetables to burgers and sandwiches. • Choose broth-based over cream-based soups. • Swap out French fries for fruit, a side salad, or another veggie. • Try a heart-healthy fatty fish, such as salmon or tuna.

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
Chinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use low-sodium soy sauce instead of full-sodium soy sauce, duck sauce, or fish sauce. • Limit foods made with monosodium glutamate (MSG), a flavor enhancer. • Consider brown rice instead of white rice and/or steamed rice over fried rice. • Sidestep fried meats and tofu – select baked or steamed options instead. • Choose fresh summer rolls in lieu of egg or spring rolls. • Ask for extra vegetables and health-boosting spices and herbs (such as ginger or lemongrass).
Fast Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you're eating on the run, keep nutritious snacks (e.g., fruit and nuts) on hand to round out your fast food entrée. • Keep portions in check by ordering off the kid's menu. • Ask for extra lettuce and tomato on burgers and sandwiches. • Select side options that include a fruit or vegetable. • Remember, even if upsizing is a deal, it's probably not the best bargain for your health.

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
Indian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose meats that are grilled or cooked in a tandoor rather than fried.• Consider roti instead of naan – it’s usually made with whole wheat.• Balance carbohydrate-rich breads, lentils, and rice with extra vegetables or a side salad.• Limit fried appetizers, such as samosas or pakora.• Ask for sauces on the side to control intake.• Try dishes with health-boosting spices, such as ginger, cumin, and coriander.
Italian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select tomato-based instead of cream-based sauces.• Request extra vegetables in pasta dishes or add a side salad.• Choose whole-wheat or bean-based pastas or polenta over refined white noodles.• Pile on health-boosting herbs, such as basil, oregano, and thyme.• Opt for dishes that include heart-healthy fatty fish, such as salmon, sardines, and tuna.• Load vegetables on pizza and limit highly processed meats (e.g., pepperoni).

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
Latin American or Mexican	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pile on the vegetables and go easy on the cheese.• Opt for avocado, guacamole, or pico de gallo instead of queso or sour cream.• Try black or pinto beans instead of refried beans.• Skip fried meat and tortilla shells. Look for baked or grilled meat selections and fresh tortillas.
Mediterranean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance out pita with lots of vegetables.• Choose grilled meats and seafood instead of fried or opt for fiber-rich lentils.• Ask for extra health-boosting herbs, such as coriander, mint, and parsley.