

INFORMATION – FLEXIBLE EATING

This document is quite lengthy; however, covers almost all the starting and basic knowledge you need in order to be successful as a flexible eater! So please, please read all of it!!

MACRONUTRIENTS (AKA. CALORIES)

Here is just a little explanation as to what it is you are putting into your body, and why your macro targets are set out the way they are

I am sure you are wondering, what is a macro? Macro is short for macronutrients. There are 3, technically 4 (since alcohol is considered part of the macro family, but we all know how “useless” – non-nutrient bearing- alcohol is for our bodies, so we will skip over this one for now).

Each macronutrient provides our body with energy, micronutrients, vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients. We need these things in the form of food for various things within our body, for ex. hormonal balance (especially in females), muscle growth, energy, a well-functioning metabolism and for all other every day bodily functions.

We know alcohol is a less nutrient dense macro and provides us with absolutely zero nutritional value; however, it does contain 7 calories per gram. Yes, you can consume alcohol while tracking macros (in moderation) & if you are interested in learning how, please reach out; more than happy to share how to accurately do this to stay within your goals/targets.

Now onto the real bench markers of what gives us life:

CARBOHYDRATES:

Carbohydrates (“**Carbs**”) are the macronutrient our bodies need in the largest amount and have 4 calories per gram.

Carbs are the body’s main. first source of energy, and are needed for a TON of functions in your body, some of which are; your central nervous system, kidney’s, brain and muscles to all function at their absolute best.

No, there is no such thing as “good” vs “bad” carbs. This is simply a myth that has circulated through society; HOWEVER, there are different forms of carbs – i.e. complex and simple carbs.

Our bodies are not able to tell the difference between 50g of carbs from say a doughnut and 50g of carbs from sweet potatoes. What it can tell the difference in between these two is the nutrient value of each. You will [obviously] get more nutrients that your body needs from the 50g of sweet potatoes vs the 50g from the Doughnut.

^ and this is where smart, planning comes into play in order to fuel your body with what it needs in the form of food.

So where can you find GOOD, whole, nutrient dense, carbs? Some examples are things such as whole grains, rice (brown obviously having more nutrients than white), potatoes, fruit, yogurt, vegetables (yes, vegetables are more on the fibrous carb side of the scale, rather than starchy, but read below on fibre and why it is a daily goal for you to it as well).

PROTEIN:

Protein is the blanket term for amino acids, which the body requires for a wide variety of functions, meaning it is the most essential macronutrient for those who lead an active lifestyle because of the crucial role it plays in muscular growth (hypertrophy) and muscular repair.

Protein also, has 4 calories per gram and you've most likely heard protein and amino acids referred to as the "building blocks of the body". When you train, you are breaking down your muscles and you need to consume protein to rebuild them.

That being said, protein is considered the superior macronutrient when it comes to body composition. Protein's function also extends beyond muscle building and repair. Proteins are essential for catalyzing biochemical reactions (enzymes), repairing and replicating your DNA, maintaining immune and cellular function, and cell structure. Biologically, the list goes on; but for our purposes, we want to know its role in shaping how our body looks, works and feels.

It is paramount that you consume enough protein. Inadequate protein consumption will result muscle loss, especially when eating at a deficit.

This protein-deficient, muscle-wasting state is called a "catabolic state". This is precisely why protein needs to be prioritized. But just as too little protein can be a bad thing, too much can be detrimental, as well. Excess protein consumption can spike insulin in the same manner as carbohydrates, and chronically elevated insulin levels carry many risks. Therefore this is why we have you between the healthy range of .8- 1.2g per pound of body weight.

So where can you get protein from? You can get your protein sources anything and depending on which approach you take (i.e. vegan, vegetarian, etc.) you will find what you like and dislike.

Some options though: chicken, fish, beef, bison (aka. game meat), lamb, turkey, etc. However, such things as Greek yogurt, nuts, and even some vegetables and some whole grains have protein in them as well.

There are also protein powders you can use, should you choose, which are also acceptable; however, getting your proteins from whole foods definitely yield some better benefits that getting them from supplementation doesn't give you, mainly satiety as "real" food digests much slower than liquid food.

FAT:

Fat accounts for 9 calories per gram. This is the most calorically dense macronutrient and usually is the most “feared”. Do not be afraid of fat.

As with all macros there no good foods vs bad, or health or unhealthy foods – there is simply nutrient dense and non-nutrient dense* or calorically dense and non-calorically dense*. However, with fat, there is a leniency towards some people “easier digesting” and “healthier” than the other forms.

As you know, there are different types of fat, and the different types have “value” in their own ways.

There are trans fats and saturated fats that make up some foods that are the ones that provide the least “health” value, where as the “better” fats are monounsaturated & polyunsaturated.

Proper fat consumption is an essential part of your diet as they protect your heart, help your food digest, balance hormone levels, help your metabolism, a for growth and development, for a secondary source of energy, to maintain cell membranes, and to absorb fat-soluble vitamins. Healthy skin and hair are products of a diet rich in fat. Fat provides cushioning for our organs and joints. Essential fatty acids can’t be synthesized by the human body, which means they must be ingested by way of food and fat is necessary for hormonal balance.

As you can tell, they are extremely important for your overall health and should not be avoided!

Fat is also extremely satiating and is slow-digesting and gratifying to the palate (hello butter on popcorn) and fat sits in your stomach much longer than carbs, which is why it is well known for dampening hunger.

SOME FURTHER, ALTHOUGH IMPORTANT, BABBLE:

What is:

1. **Nutrient Dense or Non-Nutrient Dense.*

Food rich in nutrients, primarily micronutrients, are “nutrient dense” foods.

These, of course, are going to be the foods we know are rich in vitamins and minerals. Things like fruits and vegetable, foods rich in iron, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and omega-3s are also what we would consider nutrient dense.

Non-nutrient dense foods are what we typically consider to be less beneficial, such as cookies, ice cream, pizza, fried foods.

2. **Calorically Dense or Non-Calorically Dense.*

Foods that are calorically dense have more calories by volume than foods that don't. There is a common misconception that calorically dense foods are "bad" but foods like nuts, avocado, and salmon are high-calorie, yet usually considered health foods.

A lot of fruits, especially those with higher carbohydrate content, would also belong to this category of calorically and nutrient dense foods. However, foods like green vegetables, which are extremely nutrient dense while being calorically less dense (which is exactly why they are encouraged, especially while dieting).

3. **Healthy" or "Unhealthy".*

It depends on who is eating what. "Health" varies from person to person and we all have different histories, goals, and lifestyles. If you are allotted less than 2000 calories a day, you will need most your food to be nutrient dense and non-calorically dense. If you are allotted over 2000 calories a day, you have some more wiggle-room to eat calorically dense foods that are less nutrient dense. So, the term "healthy meal" is just as vague as "clean eating" and this is where you need to use your brain. Many people would say that a cheeseburger and fries is an "unhealthy meal", but how do they figure? There is value in red meat (iron), a potato has a rich micronutrient profile, and lettuce/tomato/onion are all nutrient dense and non-calorically dense. Just because you add cheese, a bun, and you fry the potato, it does not mean that the health benefits disappear, you simply just added some extra carbs and fats.

Food Restrictions:

You have absolutely none but always keep in mind overeating anything can cause health problems, and of course we are more likely to overeat things like doughnuts and French fries. Because they are delicious, but just because you can overeat something, does not mean that you inevitably will, or have to.

MODERATION & BALANCE ARE KEY.

No foods need to directly be avoided unless you have a medical illness that has been diagnosed by a physician.

Please also keep in mind the power and nutrient content in whole, unprocessed foods. Sure, everyone loves a doughnut, but please don't only eat them and deprive your body of what it needs. Your body will function better when it gets the nutrients it needs, from whole foods that are easily digested and cause the least amount of "influx" in your digestive system. This type of eating will also help you feel the best and perform your best.

Speaking of nutrients...

MICRONUTRIENTS

I am going to give a brief explanation on micronutrients. These are extremely vital, so while you are working hard to hit your daily macros, make sure you are taking these micros into account as well.

You get much of your micronutrients from whole, nutrient-dense food. This is a must in anyone's diet, so make sure to prioritize.

Micronutrients include things such as vitamins A, B-complex, C, D, etc. I am trusting you to know what your daily intake on these are, or by direction of your doctor, etc. However, one micro I want to mention and make sure you're hitting everyday:

FIBRE:

What does fibre do, and why do I need to make sure I am eating enough?

Fibre is a carbohydrate that passes through the digestive system without being digested. Fibre is extremely important with load of benefits - helps keep you regular, lowers cholesterol and helps regulate your blood glucose levels, plus more.

WHY

Now that you have a pretty good understanding of what macros and micros are, our first step together is to find out your maintenance or energy balance for your body.

This is next bit is our "starting point" for figuring out exactly how many calories ("energy") your body needs in a day, known as your maintenance calories (energy in vs out).

For example. let's say your body burns 2,000 calories a day during regular exercise (weight training, cardio, etc.), normal daily activities and your body doing its thing to sustain itself (breathing, digesting food, etc.) - the 2,000 calories would be your maintenance level.

If you then consumed only 2,000 calories a day, your body would remain, for the most part the same weight. So, simply put everything will be "maintained."

So, why are we having you eat at maintenance first instead of jumping into a calorie deficit so you "LOSE ALL THE WEIGHT"?

Good question and the ultimate answer is **homeostasis**.

We want to get your body into a good level "playing field" before we start placing your energy intake into a deficit and stressing your probably already stressed body (depending on dieting history, exercise history, stress, etc.).

Weight loss is simple, it's calories in vs. calories out and making sure you're eating the proper

amount to supply your body with the food and nutrients it needs to function optimally. However, if you have been constantly dieting, under or over eating, pushing your body in the gym, we need to get your metabolism back to “normal” before creating a deficit.

Why homeostasis important:

- From all nutritional variables, optimal energy supply is considered most vital for human performance. It is postulated that lack of energy homeostasis is the basic problem in the development of overtraining;
- Change is stressful on your body. Adding (or losing) tissue forces your body to recalibrate itself to a new weight. If your body is regularly subjected to the stress of gaining or losing weight, it will perform better with the weight fluctuation variable removed;
- Homeostasis creates an internal equilibrium in spite of external day-to-day factors that affect us (eg: break-ups, school, work). Being in a state of homeostasis is low stress, which makes it easier to deal with unexpected circumstances in life;
- The systems of our body and our organs thrive in homeostasis. If any part of the nervous system is damaged, homeostasis is difficult or impossible to maintain.

So yes, while some of these numbers may seem high, this is our starting point. Some people are carb sensitive, some are fat, some need more protein, the variables are endless, so this is where we will start and learn together as to what your body needs to function at its absolute best.

DAILY & WEEKLY TARGETS EXPLAINED (*THIS IS ALSO A SHEET IN YOUR TRACKER*)

As you will have seen from your Macro Target Breakdown Sheet you received when you started, you have two breakdowns. One for daily targets and one for weekly targets.

Simply put, this way of tracking macros allows for more flexibility. Meaning, some days you may be hungrier than other, so you can allot X amount of carbs to that day, and eat less the next day when you are not so hungry.

Or if you are someone, like myself, who enjoys eating more on the weekends (for whatever reason; home cooking, going out to social events, etc.), you can adjust your fat and carb targets to account for this and the possible influx of calories for those days.

For example.

Say you are a 150LB female, eating 2,000 calories a day, with a daily & weekly macro breakdown of:

- 130g of protein* (520 calories/day) = 910g a week (3640 calories/week)
- 223g of carbs (895 calories/day) = 561g a week (6244 calories/week)
- 65g of fat a day (585 calories/day) = 455g a week (4095 calories/week)

So, hypothetically, you could split your daily intakes like this:

Monday to Friday = 130g of protein, 180g of carbs and 55g of fat - daily
= 1735 calories a day

Saturday & Sunday = 130g of protein, 330g of carbs and 90g of fat - daily
= 2650 calories a day

Or if you want to just hit your daily targets every day as that will provide you with the ability to stay consistent, you can do that too.

Or you can eat your daily targets but if you know one day out of the week you are going to be going out and want to eat more, eat less carbs/fat from other days in order to eat more that one day.

Ex. Eat 10g of carbs less a day for 6 days of the week, and 5g of fat less a day for 6 days a week, allotting you an extra 60g of carbs for that night out, and an extra 30g of fat.

However, you want to work it, so that you hit your weekly targets and it all “evens” out. Keeping in mind that we will never be perfect, so aiming for within 5-10g (+/-) per macro, per day, is perfectly imperfect!! That is the beauty of flexible eating; you make it work for you and your lifestyle, not the other way around.

*Please see information on protein as to why your protein target needs to be met every day and cannot be macro-shared.

MyFitnessPAL

Please download this app. It will be your backbone when learning how to track your macros. It has such a great database of food that I doubt you will never be able to find something - but if you don't, you can create an entry. You can also create recipes, and save meals, etc.!

Please reach out if you are struggling to start up or understand MFP!

GENERAL INFO

Whole nutrient dense foods are going to be your best friend and help provide your body with the nutrients, vitamins, fibre, etc. that it needs to function optimal and at its best on a day-to-day basis.

Staying away from all those high-processed, chemical filled, less nutrient dense foods will probably will be the best for your body. We all know that by eating more nutrient dense foods you can eat more in a day; however, do not deprive yourself either, be mindful of what you are feeling/needing and listen to your body. Having a doughnut or some ice cream here and there will not de-rail progress and it will help keep you sane!

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM YOU DAILY?

- ❖ Water is all relative to the person; however, maintaining a minimum consumption of 2 litres of water a day should be aimed for and drinking more while you are on a cut will be extremely beneficial and help alleviate some hunger "pains". If you have a tough time drinking water, grab some mio, or add some lemon, fruit, cucumbers, etc.;
- ❖ Hitting your daily fibre requirements (min. 12-15g per 1,000kcal consumed) is just as important as hitting your daily macros/micros (as mentioned). You will see your daily fibre target on your initial breakdown sheet;
- ❖ **Eat at least 4-5 servings of vegetables and 2-3 servings of fruit a day (think of a serving as the size of your palm);**
- ❖ Enjoy the journey! We're here to have fun and build this around your life, not the other way around. We don't want a crazy diet and fitness regime that you burn out on and cannot sustain for life.
- ❖ Get comfortable with not being perfect. From counting macros to working out, we will never be 100%. You are human.
- ❖ Your best every day. Whatever that looks like from day to day. If you feel you did your best and are happy with yourself and your efforts that day, then perfect. You did an amazing job that day!
- ❖ Aim for as many meals a day as allows you to get in all your calories, spreading protein

evenly across meals.

- ❖ **ALWAYS** ask questions - there is no such thing as a dumb question – I am here to see you succeed and will help in any way I can. Send me 500 emails a week, I don't care, whatever you need to help you succeed.

SUPPLEMENTS

(not need at all, but here are some suggestions):

As long as you are getting your eating whole, nutrient dense food, getting in your servings of vegetables and fruit and your fibre target every day, the need for supplementation isn't needed and I think it's safe to say, eating food is much better than drinking it – although there are some pretty tasty protein bars out there.

But these are some good ones to take that most people are low on (or to make sure you are getting a good spectrum of nutrients your body needs). Supplements are optional, and we aren't directly recommending them. Feel free to consult a doctor or registered dietician:

- Multi-vitamin (low dose, one per day type);
- Vitamin D;
- Fish Oil (1-3g if not regularly eating fatty fish);
- Creatine (3-5g per day);
- Protein powder (if you find yourself short on protein a lot); and
- BCAA's (really helps enhance the flavour of water).