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The No-BS Nutrition Guide

Everything you actually need to know to eat for your body and your goals — without the noise, fads, or confusion.

WELCOME

Start Here

First — thank you for grabbing this guide. Most nutrition advice online is either trying to sell you a magic pill or drowning you in science you don't need. This is neither.

This guide gives you the **real fundamentals** — the same principles I use with every client, whether they're trying to lose fat, build muscle, or just feel better. Read it once and you'll understand more about nutrition than 90% of people at your gym.

What this guide IS: a practical framework to calculate your needs, understand macros, and build meals that match your goal.

What this guide is NOT: a personalized plan. Your body, schedule, preferences, and history are unique. This guide teaches you the rules — a custom plan applies them to YOU. (More on that at the end.)

One promise: if you apply even half of what's in here consistently for 8 weeks, you'll see a change. Consistency beats perfection every single time.

SECTION 1

Calories — The Foundation

Everything in nutrition starts here. A calorie is a unit of energy. Your body burns energy to stay alive and move; food gives energy back. The balance between the two decides whether you lose, gain, or maintain weight.

The only rule that always applies

- **Eat fewer calories than you burn** → **you lose weight** (mostly fat, if you train and eat enough protein)
- **Eat more calories than you burn** → **you gain weight** (muscle + some fat, if you train)
- **Eat about the same** → **you maintain** (and can slowly recomp — lose fat + build muscle at once)

No food is "magic" and no food is "forbidden." Calories are the master switch. Everything else (macros, timing, food choice) fine-tunes the result.

Step 1 — Calculate your BMR

Your BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) is the energy you'd burn lying in bed all day. Use the Mifflin-St Jeor formula — the most accurate for most people:

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MEN:    BMR = 10 × weight(kg) + 6.25 × height(cm) - 5 × age + 5
WOMEN:  BMR = 10 × weight(kg) + 6.25 × height(cm) - 5 × age - 161
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Tip: 1 kg = 2.2 lb · 1 inch = 2.54 cm. To convert lb to kg, divide by 2.2.

Step 2 — Multiply by your activity level (get your TDEE)

Your TDEE (Total Daily Energy Expenditure) is your BMR × how active you are. This is roughly the calories you burn per day:

Activity Level	Description	Multiply BMR by
Sedentary	Desk job, little or no exercise	1.2
Lightly active	Light exercise 1–3 days/week	1.375
Moderately active	Moderate exercise 3–5 days/week	1.55
Very active	Hard exercise 6–7 days/week	1.725
Athlete	2x/day training or physical job	1.9

Example: A 30-year-old woman, 65 kg, 165 cm, training 4x/week.

$BMR = 10 \times 65 + 6.25 \times 165 - 5 \times 30 - 161 = \mathbf{1,370 \text{ kcal}}$

$TDEE = 1,370 \times 1.55 = \mathbf{\sim 2,124 \text{ kcal/day}}$ (this is her maintenance)

Important: These formulas are estimates, not gospel. They get you within ~10%. The real number comes from tracking your weight for 2–3 weeks and adjusting. Your TDEE is whatever keeps your weight stable.

SECTION 2

Pick Your Goal

Once you know your TDEE (maintenance calories), you adjust it based on what you want. Pick ONE goal at a time — chasing two at once usually means achieving neither.

Fat Loss (Cut)

TDEE – 300 to 500 kcal

Eat 300–500 kcal below maintenance. Expect to lose ~0.3–0.7 kg (0.5–1.5 lb) per week. Don't go more aggressive than this — bigger deficits eat muscle, wreck energy, and aren't sustainable. **Keep protein high to protect muscle.**

Muscle Gain (Lean Bulk)

TDEE + 200 to 400 kcal

Eat 200–400 kcal above maintenance. A small surplus builds muscle with minimal fat. Expect ~0.2–0.4 kg (0.5–1 lb) gain per week. Going bigger ("dirty bulk") just makes you fat. Patience wins here.

Recomposition (Recomp)

TDEE ± 0 to –150 kcal

Eat at or slightly below maintenance with high protein + hard training. You build muscle and lose fat at the same time. Slower than a dedicated cut or bulk, but the scale barely moves while your body changes. Best for beginners and those returning after a break.

Maintenance

TDEE ± 0 kcal

Eat at maintenance to hold your current physique. Useful between cuts and bulks, or when life is busy. Not "doing nothing" — maintaining a good physique is a skill.

Coach's note: Most people should start with fat loss OR recomp. You can't build a noticeable amount of muscle if it's hidden under body fat. Get lean-ish first, then build.

SECTION 3

Macros Made Simple

"Macros" = macronutrients: protein, carbs, and fats. They make up all the calories you eat. Hitting the right balance is what separates "losing weight" from "losing fat and looking good."

Macro	Calories per gram	What it does
Protein	4 kcal/g	Builds & repairs muscle, keeps you full, preserves muscle in a deficit
Carbohydrates	4 kcal/g	Primary energy source, fuels training & brain, fills out muscles
Fats	9 kcal/g	Hormone production, vitamin absorption, joint health

Protein — the king of macros

If you only get one thing right, make it protein. It's the most important macro for body composition because it builds muscle, keeps you full, and burns more calories to digest than carbs or fat.

Your goal	Daily protein target
Fat loss	2.0–2.4 g per kg of body weight (higher protects muscle)
Muscle gain	1.8–2.2 g per kg of body weight
Recomp / maintenance	1.8–2.2 g per kg of body weight

Quick math: an 80 kg person aiming for fat loss needs ~160–190g protein per day. Spread it across 3–5 meals.

Fats — don't fear them, don't overdo them

Fats are essential for hormones (including testosterone). Never drop them too low. Aim for **0.8–1.0 g per kg** of body weight, or about 20–30% of total calories.

Carbs — your training fuel

Carbs aren't the enemy — they fuel hard training and fill out your muscles. After setting protein and fats, **the rest of your calories come from carbs**. The more active you are, the more carbs you can (and should) eat.

How to build your macros (in order):

1. Set **calories** based on your goal (Section 2)
2. Set **protein** based on body weight (table above)
3. Set **fats** at 0.8–1.0 g/kg

4. **Fill the rest with carbs** (remaining calories $\div$ 4)

SECTION 4

Food Reference Tables

Build your meals from these. All values are approximate, per 100g raw/uncooked unless noted. Brands vary — always check labels.

Protein Sources

Food	Protein	Carbs	Fats	Kcal
Chicken breast	31g	0g	3.6g	165
Turkey breast	29g	0g	1g	135
Lean beef (90%)	26g	0g	10g	196
Salmon	20g	0g	13g	208
White fish (cod, tilapia)	18–20g	0g	1g	85–96
Shrimp	24g	0g	0.3g	99
Canned tuna (water)	26g	0g	1g	116
Whole eggs	6g/egg	0.6g	5g	77/egg
Egg whites	3.6g/white	0.2g	0g	17/white
Greek yogurt 0%	10g	3.6g	0.4g	59
Cottage cheese	11g	3.2g	4.3g	98
Whey protein	25g/scoop	3g	1.5g	120/scoop
Lentils (cooked)	9g	20g	0.4g	116
Tofu	8g	2g	4.8g	76

Carbohydrate Sources

Food	Protein	Carbs	Fats	Kcal
White rice (cooked)	2.7g	28g	0.3g	130
Oats (dry)	17g	66g	7g	389
Sweet potato	1.6g	20g	0.1g	86
Potato (boiled)	2g	20g	0.1g	87
Quinoa (cooked)	4g	21g	1.9g	120
Pasta (dry)	13g	71g	1.5g	350
Whole grain bread	4g/slice	15g	1g	80/slice
Banana	1.3g	27g	0.4g	105/medium
Plantain	1.3g	32g	0.4g	122
Cassava / yuca	1.4g	38g	0.3g	160
Apple / orange	0.5g	25g	0.3g	95
Berries	0.7g	14g	0.3g	57

Fat Sources

Food	Protein	Carbs	Fats	Kcal
Olive oil	0g	0g	100g	884
Avocado	2g	8.5g	15g	160
Almonds	21g	22g	49g	579
Walnuts	15g	14g	65g	654
Peanut butter	25g	20g	50g	588
Whole egg (yolk fat)	—	—	5g/egg	—
Chia / flax seeds	17g	42g	31g	486

Vegetables: eat them freely. Broccoli, spinach, peppers, zucchini, asparagus, green beans — they're so low in calories you barely need to count them. Aim for veggies at lunch and dinner for fiber, micronutrients, and fullness.

SECTION 5

How to Build Any Meal

You don't need to weigh everything forever. Once you understand the framework, you can build a balanced meal anywhere — home, restaurant, or traveling.

The simple plate formula

- **Protein (palm-sized):** a portion of chicken, fish, beef, eggs, or a plant source. Every meal.
- **Carbs (cupped-hand):** rice, potato, oats, fruit. More on training days, less on rest days.
- **Veggies (fist-sized or more):** fill half the plate. Fiber, volume, micronutrients.
- **Fats (thumb-sized):** oil, nuts, avocado. A little goes a long way — they're calorie-dense.

Example day (for ~2,000 kcal, fat loss):

- **Breakfast:** 3 eggs + oats + berries
- **Lunch:** Chicken breast + rice + broccoli + olive oil
- **Snack:** Greek yogurt + fruit + a few almonds
- **Dinner:** Salmon or lean beef + sweet potato + salad

Meal timing — what actually matters

Most "timing" advice is overblown. Here's the truth:

- **Total daily intake matters most** — far more than when you eat.
- **Protein spread across the day** (3–5 meals) is slightly better for muscle than one big hit.
- **Carbs around training** (before/after) help performance and recovery — useful but not magic.
- **Eating late at night doesn't make you fat** — total calories do. Eat when it fits your life.
- **Breakfast isn't "mandatory"** — if you prefer skipping it (intermittent fasting), that's fine, as long as you hit your targets.

SECTION 6

The Multipliers: Water & Sleep

You can nail your calories and macros and still stall if these two are off. They're free, and they're non-negotiable.

Water

- Aim for **3–4 liters per day** (more in heat or with hard training).
- Hydration controls hunger, energy, digestion, and performance.
- Often "hunger" is actually thirst. Drink a glass before reaching for a snack.

Sleep — the most underrated factor

- **7–9 hours per night.** This is when muscle is built and fat loss is regulated.
- Poor sleep raises cortisol (more belly fat), increases hunger, and crushes recovery.
- Sleeping under 6 hours can halve your fat-loss results even with a perfect diet.

Reality check: a person who sleeps 8 hours and trains 4x/week will out-progress a person who sleeps 5 hours and trains 6x/week. Recovery is where results happen.

Common Mistakes That Stall Progress

Mistake	The fix
Not eating enough protein	The #1 mistake. Hit your daily protein target every day.
Guessing portions ("eyeballing")	Use a food scale for 2–3 weeks until you learn real portion sizes.
Drinking your calories	Sodas, juices, fancy coffees, alcohol — they add up fast and don't fill you up.
Too aggressive a deficit	Crash diets burn muscle and rebound. Slow and steady wins.
"Healthy" foods with no limit	Nuts, olive oil, nut butters are healthy but calorie-dense. Still count them.
Weekend blowouts	5 good days + 2 huge cheat days = no deficit. The weekly average is what counts.
Chasing the scale daily	Weight fluctuates with water/sodium. Track the weekly average, not single days.
No patience	Real change takes 8–12 weeks minimum. Trust the process.

SECTION 7

How to Track (The Smart Way)

You don't have to track forever — but tracking for the first few weeks teaches you what your food actually contains. After that, it becomes second nature.

Your toolkit

- **Digital food scale** (~\$15). Weigh protein and carb sources. Measuring cups aren't accurate enough.
- **A tracking app**: MyFitnessPal, YAZIO, MacroFactor, or Cronometer. All have barcode scanners — scan, enter weight, done.
- **Weekly weigh-ins**: same time, same conditions (morning, after bathroom, before eating). Track the weekly average.
- **A measuring tape**: waist, hips, arms. Sometimes the scale stalls but inches drop — especially during recomp.
- **Progress photos**: every 2 weeks, same light, same poses. The mirror lies day-to-day; photos don't.

The 3-week calibration:

1. Calculate your target calories (Sections 1 & 2)
2. Eat that amount, tracked accurately, for 2–3 weeks
3. Watch your weekly average weight
4. Losing too fast? Add 150 kcal. Not moving? Remove 150 kcal. Dial it in.

Remember: the formulas give you a starting point. Your body gives you the truth. Adjust based on what actually happens on the scale and in the mirror over weeks — not days.

You've got the **knowledge.** Now get the plan.

This guide gives you the rules. But your body, your schedule, your food preferences, your training, and your history are unique — and a plan built around YOU will always beat a generic one.

→ **Want a custom plan built for you?**

I build personalized nutrition and training plans for real people with real lives — fat loss, muscle gain, competition prep, or just looking and feeling your best. Every plan is calculated for your body, your goals, and the food you actually like to eat. Message me on Telegram to start.

→ **Want more free tips?**

Follow along for no-BS nutrition and training content, form breakdowns, recipes, and the occasional reality check. If this guide helped you, the content will too.

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