LARISSA LYONS TRAINING

Nutrition Guide

CONTENTS

NUTRITION GUIDE

Within this nutrition guide, you'll find explanations of calories, macros, tracking, and nutrition labels, along with some of my favorite recipe and snack ideas.

I'm also giving you some food for thought (pun definitely intended) on new ways to think about your grub!

ENERGY BASICS

A calorie is a unit of energy. Weight loss occurs when more energy is expended than consumed; weight gain occurs when more energy is consumed than expended.

In other words, if you eat less calories than you burn, you'll lose weight. If you eat more calories than you burn, you'll gain weight.

Weight loss example:

Calories consumed in food today = 1700

Calories expended today = 2200

Calorie *deficit* of 500 calories

Weight gain example:

Calories consumed in food today = 2000

Calories expended today = 1500

Calorie *surplus* of 500 calories

Total daily energy expenditure (TDEE) is the amount of energy (calories) spent in an average day.

There are three different ways in which our body expends energy every day, making up TDEE:

- Resting metabolic rate (accounts for ~70% of TDEE)
- Thermic effect of food (accounts for ~6-10% of TDEE)
- Energy expended during physical activity (accounts for ~20% of TDEE)

I want you to focus on resting metabolic rate at the moment. Your resting metabolic rate (the amount of energy expended while at rest) is where most of your calories are spent every day. These are the vital functions of the body, like blood circulation and simply breathing. Crazy, right?!

One (of many) things that can affect resting metabolic rate is the amount of fat-free mass on the body.

An increase in fat-free mass (AKA losing fat and gaining muscle) can have a gradual increase in resting metabolic rate, meaning your body will burn more calories at rest. So, reducing fat mass and increasing muscle mass will increase the calories you burn, even when you aren't doing much. That's pretty cool.

This is one reason why starvation diets should be avoided. These diets lead to decreases in muscle mass, which leads to a decline in resting metabolic rate (less calories expended at rest).

MACROS

So, can I eat anything as long as I stay within my calories?

If you are in a calorie deficit, you will theoretically lose weight.

But not every food is equal. Your body also needs nutrients and vitamins, so eating junk food within your calories isn't the way to go. Hence the importance of micronutrients and macronutrients.

Micronutrients are nutrients required in smaller quantities, including vitamins and minerals. These generally are accounted for in a well-balanced diet.

Macronutrients (macros) are nutrients required in large quantities, including proteins, fats, and carbohydrates.

PROTEIN

Protein functions to build and repair body tissues and structures.

Proteins are made up of amino acids, some of which are made naturally in our bodies.

Other amino acids need to be obtained from the foods we eat. These are called *essential amino acids*.

It is important to eat high-quality protein sources that provide as many of these essential amino acids as possible (AKA *complete proteins*). Meats and dairy products are the major sources of complete proteins.

If a food is lacking in one or more essential amino acids, it is called an incomplete protein. Sources of incomplete protein include grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, and other vegetables. Incomplete proteins can be combined to obtain all of the essential amino acids.

Incomplete protein examples include:

- Barley
- Cornmeal
- Oats
- Buckwheat
- Pasta
- Rye
- Wheat
- Beans
- Lentils
- Peanuts
- Chickpeas
- Soy products
- Sesame seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Walnuts
- Cashews
- Pumpkin seeds

Once digested, protein can also be used for immediate energy or stored as fat (rather than building or repairing). If carbohydrate or total energy intake is too low, protein from your diet or from your body is broken down for energy.

Consuming enough protein ensures that your body uses carbohydrates and fats as the primary energy sources, saving the protein for muscle building.

If protein intake exceeds physiological needs, then it may be stored as fat. So, even though you may want to consume exceedingly high amounts of protein to build muscle, if you exceed the amount needed for your body, it will be stored as fat. It really is a balance!

FATS

Lipids are a group of compounds that include triglycerides (fats and oils), phospholipids, and sterols. Of the lipids contained in food, 95% are fats and oils.

Fats can be saturated or unsaturated. Saturated fats raise bad cholesterol levels, increasing the risk for heart disease. Unsaturated fats increase good cholesterol, decreasing the risk of heart disease.

Trans-fats are produced through hydrogenation (processing unsaturated fats to make them harder at room temperature). Trans-fats have been shown to increase bad cholesterol and decrease good cholesterol, much like saturated fats.

Try to obtain most of your dietary fat from unsaturated fats, while limiting the amount of fats obtained from saturated and trans-fats.

Fats are often seen as the scary macro that you should totally cut out of your diet. But they are vital to your health!

Fats have a variety of important functions in the body:

- Provide a concentrated source of energy in the diet
- Insulate the body
- Create a long-lasting sensation of fullness after a meal
- Regulate and excrete nutrients in the cells
- Act as carriers for fat-soluble vitamins
- Involved in cell membrane structure and function and cell signals
- Act as precursors to hormones

unsaturated fats	***saturated fats***	***trans-fats***
monounsaturated olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, avocados, peanuts, almonds, pistachios	meat, poultry, lard, butter, cheese, cream, eggs, whole milk	margarine, shortening
polyunsaturated vegetable oils: safflower, soy, corn, and sunflower oils	tropical oils: coconut oil, palm, and palm kernel oil	fried foods: fried chicken, donuts
Omega 3 fatty acids: herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, flax seeds	many baked goods	fast food
		many baked goods and pastries

CARBOHYDRATES

There are 3 types of carbohydrates:

- sugars (simple)
- starches (complex)
- fiber

Carbohydrates are called simple or complex based on their chemical makeup.

Sugars, or simple carbohydrates, are easily digested, basic sugars. These can provide a fast form of energy. Some of these sugars are naturally occurring in things like fruit and milk, while candy, cookies, and soda contain added sugars.

Simple carbohydrates in the form of fruit and vegetables are not “bad.” These foods have essential vitamins and minerals that your body needs. Simple carbohydrates found in things like soda, candy, and desserts should not be your main source of carbohydrates, as these foods have little nutritional value. (Of course, you are 100% allowed to have treats just for the sake of enjoyment – just be mindful!)

Simple sugars include glucose (commonly known as blood sugar), fructose (fruit sugar), galactose, sucrose (table sugar), lactose (milk sugar), and maltose.

Complex carbohydrates are made up of longer sugar molecules, which take more time for the body to break down. Therefore, they can provide a longer-lasting, more consistent form of energy.

Complex carbohydrates include starch and fiber. Starch and fiber are found in fruits, vegetables, seeds, and roots. In our bodies, starch is digested to glucose to be used for energy and other bodily functions.

Fiber is a part of the plant that humans cannot digest; instead, it passes through the digestive tract while moderating blood glucose levels and lowering cholesterol, among many other benefits. Fiber also adds bulk to the diet and establishes regular bowel movements.

When choosing complex carbohydrates, whole grains provide more vitamins, fiber, and minerals than their processed counterparts (think whole grain pasta versus regular pasta). Whole grains like whole wheat flour, quinoa, brown rice, barley, corn, and oats provide more nutrients than processed grains like white rice, white bread, pasta, and baked goods made with white flour.

Despite what you may hear about all the low-carb diets, the body needs carbs! They are the preferred form of energy in the body, sparing protein for muscle building and aiding in efficient fat-use.

That's right – maximal fat utilization cannot occur without sufficient carbohydrates. They also provide nutrients and vitamins that are not found in proteins or fats.

To get the most energy-use out of your carbs, consume a high-carb meal 2-4 hours *before exercising*.

If you workout in the morning, a carb powder to mix in your water may be a good option to give you that energy boost you need for your workout since glycogen stores are lowered by as much as 80% in the morning.

If you are exercising for more than 1 hour, consuming carbs *during exercise* can help to supply glucose to the working muscles whose glycogen stores are dwindling. (This is why you'll see marathoners consuming a carb drink throughout their run).

Consuming carbs within 30 minutes *after exercising* can help maximize recovery and decrease any loss of muscle glycogen.

MACRONUTRIENT SUMMARY

proteins

- builds & repairs body tissues/structures
- can be used for energy, especially in negative-energy balance
- 4 calories per gram

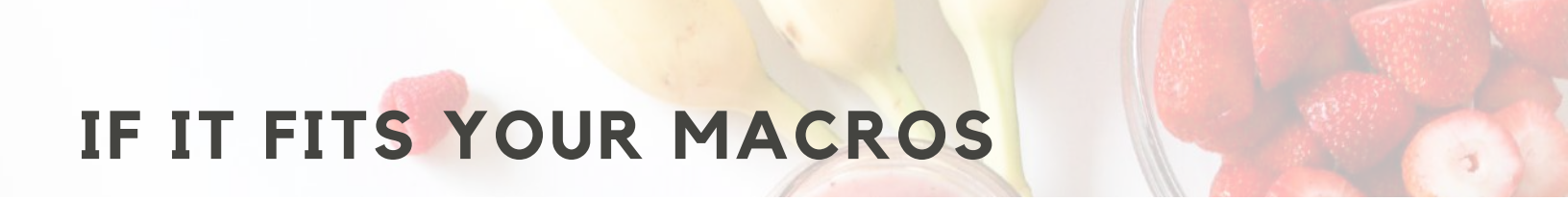
fats

- provide a concentrated source of energy in the diet
- regulate nutrients in the body
- 9 calories per gram

carbohydrates

- include sugars, starches, & fiber
- primary energy source for the body
- provide nutrients that protein and fat cannot
- should make up the highest percentage of calories in your diet
- 4 calories per gram

When total caloric intake exceeds output, any excess carbohydrate, dietary fat, or protein may be stored as body fat until energy expenditure once again exceeds energy input.



IF IT FITS YOUR MACROS

The method of eating within your calorie and macro targets is called “If It Fits Your Macros” or IIFYM. However, just eating for your macro targets still leaves out the importance of micronutrients.

Technically, you can eat pizza and wings all the time to hit your macro and calorie targets, but you won’t feel good, and you’re missing out on lots of micronutrients. A well-balanced diet consisting of mostly whole foods will give you lots of micronutrients and make you feel good.

TRACKING

While tracking food isn’t for everyone, counting calories and macros has several advantages. Tracking can help you become aware of what food you’re eating and how much of it you’re eating. Many of us eat handfuls of something without realizing how calorie-dense it is. With more knowledge about what you’re consuming, you can make more informed, intentional decisions around meal time.

Taking photos of everything you eat or writing down what you consume in a day may be a good starting place for you if you haven't tracked your food intake before. This is to gradually bring awareness to what you eat without the overwhelm of suddenly having to weigh everything you consume.

When you’re ready, you’ll start weighing your food and liquids and tracking it in MyFitnessPal.

FOOD WEIGHING BASICS

Use a food tracking app such as MyFitnessPal (MFP). You can add your goal calories and macros per day (unless you’re trying to find your maintenance calories).

Each macronutrient has a specific number of calories. Protein has 4 calories per gram, carbohydrates have 4 calories per gram, and fat has 9 calories per gram.

MFP adds the grams of each macronutrient in the food you weigh, along with their corresponding calories.

Start by placing your plate or container on a kitchen scale, and zero/tare the scale, so you aren't weighing the container. Add your food, one food item at a time, to your container. Mark the weight of each food item in MFP.

Example of food prepping baby carrots & celery sticks for a snack:

- Place container on scale. Zero the scale so as not to weight the container.

- Add your baby carrots to the container. Mark number of grams of baby carrots in MFP. Zero the scale.

- Add celery sticks to the container. Mark number of grams of celery sticks in MFP.

All done!

MFP also has options to just select "1 egg" for instance, instead of weighing the egg. It will calculate the calories in that food as well as the macros.

MFP also scans barcodes on food packages to make it easy!

Remember to specify what form your food is in when tracking in MFP. For instance, if you're weighing raw chicken, specify "raw." If you're weighing grilled chicken, search for "grilled chicken." If you're weighing fresh broccoli, search for "fresh broccoli," but if you're weighing roasted broccoli, search for "roasted broccoli."

Take advantage of the meals and recipes logging options in MFP.

If you often have 2 scrambled eggs with a green bell pepper, 1 cup of coffee, with 2 tablespoons of almond milk for breakfast, save that as a meal in MFP so that you can easily log it for tomorrow's breakfast. Once you log it, you can edit the amounts of each item if necessary, such as the weight of the chopped green bell pepper.

Similarly, if you're making a recipe you found online, you can copy and paste the URL into MFP, and it will log the ingredients for you to create a new recipe.

However, confirm the ingredients that MFP pulls up for you so the calories/macros are accurate.

After you've cooked your recipe, weigh all of the food this recipe made. This can be in different containers; write down the weights of each container of food so you can add them up.

Input the total weight of the recipe as your number of servings in the MFP recipe form. Now when you have leftovers of this recipe, weigh the amount of your serving – this is your "number of servings" and simply log it in MFP!

Example of using recipes:

- You find a chicken noodle soup recipe.

- Copy and paste the recipe URL into MFP.

- MFP will automatically input ingredients taken from the URL.

- Confirm each ingredient and its amount. You change the generic noodles that MFP input to the specific brand of noodles you're using.

- After making the soup, you weigh it in grams in several containers. You add up all the weights for a total weight of 500 grams.

- Go to the chicken noodle soup recipe in MFP, edit the number of servings recipe makes to "500."

- You log the recipe and weigh the amount of chicken noodle soup you're having for dinner that night. The scale reads "100 grams." Log 100 servings!

Keep weighing your food throughout the day and pay attention to how the calories and macros add up.

You may notice that most of your calories are coming from carbohydrates or fat for instance, and that you need more protein in your diet.

This is why I give you specific macro targets to hit, which means you will be adjusting what you eat to hit those targets.

Your goal is to weigh everything you eat in a day to hit your macro/calorie targets.

This is where meal prepping comes in handy. Weigh out your breakfast and lunch the night before, and don't forget condiments, dressings, butter, and oil. Dressings are often high in fat; you don't want to forget about those, especially if you are lathering salads in them!

CALCULATING YOUR TARGETS

In order to make a change in your body, you need to adjust your energy consumption and expenditure.

If you signed up for a personalized program with me, I WILL CALCULATE ALL YOUR TARGETS FOR YOU.

However, if you're like me, then you like to know where these numbers are coming from.

The steps to obtain your calorie and macro targets are below.

1 - CALCULATE YOUR MAINTENANCE CALORIES

Find your maintenance calories. This number is how many calories you consume daily on average, resulting in your current physique. (Thus, you would keep eating this amount to maintain your current figure).

There are a few ways to find your maintenance calories:

OPTION A: I can use the following information to estimate your calorie intake: sex, age, weight, height, and activity level. However, I've found that these maintenance calorie estimates tend to be inaccurate when comparing them to the maintenance calories I obtain when tracking my food intake.

OPTION B: Hence, the second method. You can also find your maintenance calories by tracking your food intake (i.e., weighing, tracking calories and macros) for 1-2 weeks and taking the average of your daily calorie intake. This is the method I prefer to use.

2 - ADJUST CALORIE INTAKE BASED ON YOUR GOAL

To lose fat, you will need to be in a calorie deficit. Once you know your daily maintenance calories, you can subtract ~200-500 calories from daily intake.

To gain muscle, you will need to be in a calorie surplus. You can add 200-500 calories onto your daily maintenance calories.

You also have the option to remain at your current intake (maintenance calories).

3 - ADJUST MACRO INTAKE BASED ON YOUR GOAL

Calculate the percentage each macronutrient makes up in your calorie total. Your diet should consist of:

- 10-35% protein
- 45-65% carbohydrates
- 25-35% fats

I will calculate those amounts based on your current diet and your goals (when you sign up for a personalized program).

HOW TO READ A NUTRITION LABEL

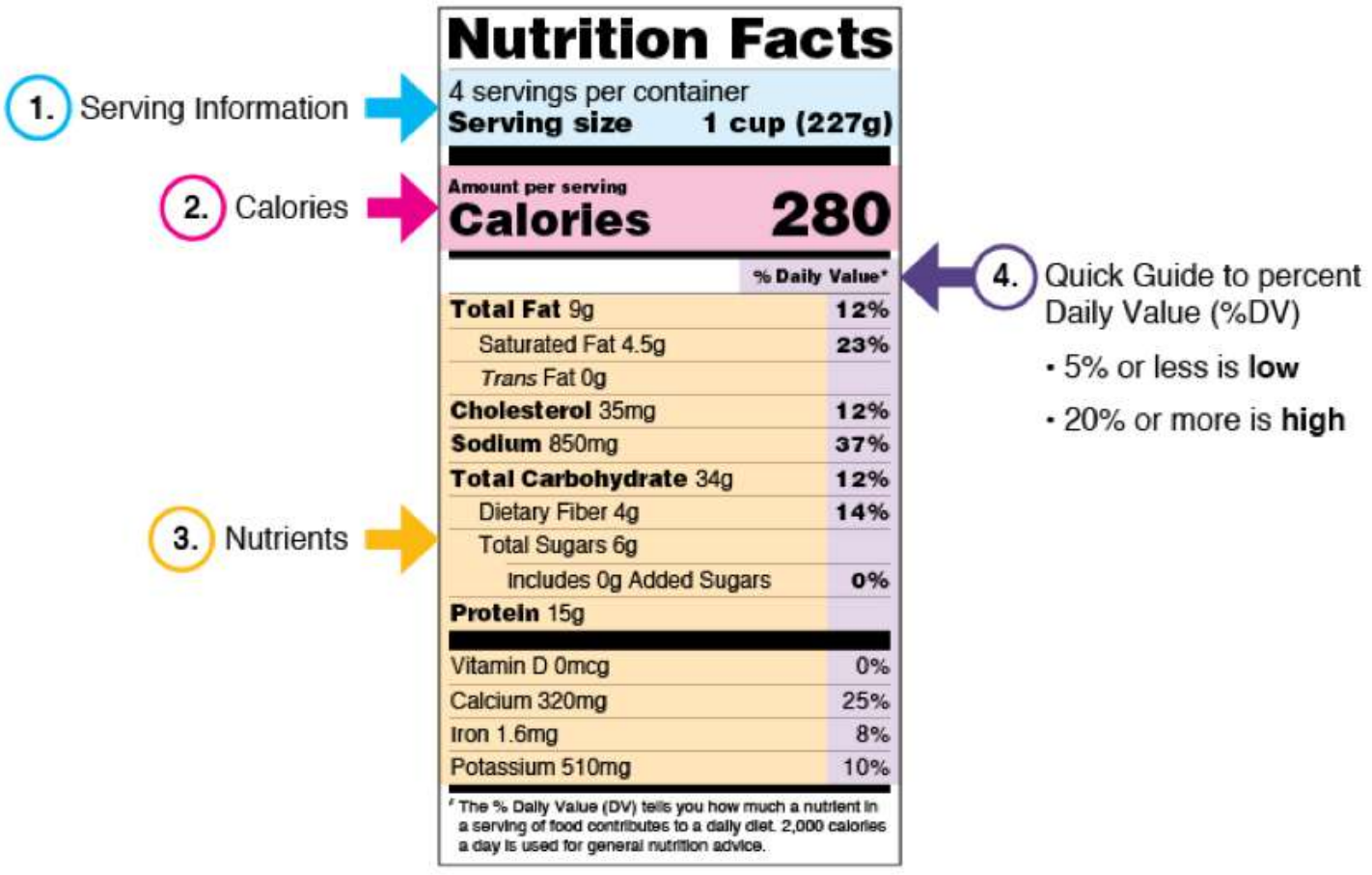
1. Serving Size

The serving size is the amount that people typically eat or drink. *It is not a recommendation of how much you should eat.*

Take note of how many servings you are eating or if you are eating more than one serving.

This portion of the label also shows how many servings are in this container. In this example, there are 4 cups in the entire container.

All the nutrients, as well as the calories, shown on the label refer to the size of the serving. For example, if you eat 2 cups of the food above, you will be consuming twice the amount of nutrients and calories shown on the label.



2. Calories

The amount of calories shown refers to the calories in the serving size. If you eat the entire package of the food above you will be consuming 4 servings of 280 calories, or 1,120 calories.

3. Nutrients

This portion lists some key nutrients that you can look at to support your personal dietary needs.

In general, nutrients to get less of include saturated fat, sodium, and added sugar (Americans generally consume too much of these). Total sugars and added sugars are included on food labels. Total sugars include sugar naturally occurring in foods like milk and fruit as well as any added sugars.

Added sugars include sugars added to the food such as sucrose, dextrose, syrup, honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices. Foods with lots of sugar are probably high in calories.

Nutrients to get more of include dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.

4. Daily Values

This portion shows how much a certain nutrient per serving size contributes to a 2000-calorie daily diet.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

For fat loss:

- Eat less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- Distribute carbs, protein, and fat throughout the day
- 4-6 meals per day; helps control hunger, minimizes blood sugar fluctuation, and increases energy
- Avoid “empty” calories and highly processed foods
- Drink a minimum of 9-13 cups of water daily
- Weigh and measure food

For muscle gain:

- Eat 4-6 meals per day
- Spread protein intake throughout the day
- Ingest carbs and protein within 90 minutes of exercise to increase recovery and protein synthesis
- Do not neglect carbs and fat

For general health:

- Select carb sources that are high in fiber
- Limit refined carbs (cookies, candy, ice cream, etc.)
- Eat a variety of nuts, seeds, fruit, vegetables, seafood, and meat.

For peak performance:

Caffeine:

- Consume 1-3 mg/lb bodyweight 1 hour before exercise for the most effective response in increasing energy for a workout (an 8 fl oz coffee has around 95 mg of caffeine)

Carbs:

- Eat a high-carb meal 2-4 hours before exercise
- Eat 30-60g every hour during exercise lasting more than 60 minutes
- Eat 0.7g/lb bodyweight 30 minutes after exercise to maximize glycogen replenishment (for a 120 lb person, this would be 84 grams of carbs)

LABELING YOUR FOOD

There's no such thing as a good or bad food. People tend to label sugar as "bad." Sugar on its own is not a harmful substance, and one component of it (glucose) is necessary for life.

When consumed as part of a calorie-controlled diet, it does not cause adverse health effects or fat gain. However, when sugar is added to make foods more flavorful, it makes them easy to overeat. This can result in increased calorie intake and fat gain.

When we label our foods as "bad," we feel guilty for eating a sugary treat, even though we are eating it in controlled, intentional amounts. So, stop the labeling, and start looking at your food as fuel and enjoyment. What food makes you feel good and energized? What food leaves you tired and bloated? That doesn't mean you won't ever eat the food that makes you feel bloated, but you'll eat it intentionally and not in absent-minded handfuls!

TRADING IN RESTRICTION FOR BALANCE

This. THIS. Write this down and put it where you need to see it! This lifestyle is about balance. When you tell yourself you can't have something, what happens? You want more of what you just said you weren't going to have for the next month. You tell yourself you're not eating cookies for the next 6 months, then you binge on a package of oreos and say F it to the whole thing.

Try this. Instead of cutting foods out, add foods in. What nutritious foods can you add to your diet? What can you add to keep you feeling full for longer?

Restriction leads to bingeing. When you stop restricting yourself from the foods you consider "bad" and allow yourself to eat them in small amounts to satisfy your cravings or as a treat, the bingeing will subside.

When you feel like you want to binge, ask yourself:

- Have I eaten enough today?
- How would I feel if I ate more of these oreos?
- Will it make me feel satisfied or sluggish?
- Am I hungry or bored?
- If I'm hungry, what can I eat that will keep me full for longer?

Remember that balance applies to the calorie counting and macro tracking as well. Be aware of a few tendencies that people may have while tracking:

- **Feeling guilty when you go over your macros and/or calories.** It is OKAY. If you ask 5 people for your macro/ calorie targets, you will get 5 different sets of numbers. This doesn't need to be exact. This is to get you on track to balance out your diet and make you aware of portion sizes and calories in the foods you're eating.

- **Focusing on the numbers more than how you feel.** You're not a machine. You don't do the same stuff every single day. Some days you may feel the need to eat more, some days you may feel the need to eat less, depending on your activity for the day.
- **Worrying about the numbers instead of enjoying the food.** This is about awareness and use as a guideline. Remember to actually enjoy your food. Food is allowed to be pleasurable and enjoyed.
- **Can lead to eating disorders.** Becoming obsessive over your numbers can lead to disordered eating.
- **Working out just to burn calories instead of working out to make you feel good.** There is WAY more to working out than the number of calories you burn. Movement is healing for your body, mind, and soul. Don't make it about "making up" for the cookie you ate.

This is about *balance* and *sustainability*. This is about bringing awareness to what you eat. Some people LOVE tracking their intake! But I want to address this before you even start tracking so you can notice these tendencies if they start.

If you do notice any of these feelings or tendencies, send me a message so we can figure out the best plan for you going forward.

All in all, this is a *guideline*. Your numbers are not the golden standard or the line that thou shall not cross.

You are changing and dynamic. So are your goals and your priorities. Remember that.

SNACKS

My favorite snacks are wholesome ones that keep me full and leave me feeling energized rather than sluggish.

Protein powder can be added to lots of things for a feeling of fullness.

- Overnight oats – check out www.eatingbirdfood.com. Her overnight oat recipes are the BOMB
- Peanut butter and granola
- Yogurt with protein powder, granola, and fruit
- Rice cake with peanut butter and honey
- Oatmeal with fruit
- Apple or banana with peanut butter
- Muesli with protein powder, almond milk, and berries
- Protein pancakes (I love the Flourish brand for these)
- PB2 powder can be substituted as a low-calorie option for peanut butter; use in smoothies, yogurt, cereal; mix with maple syrup for a caramel sauce.
- Yasso bars (frozen Greek yogurt bars)

RECIPES

My go-to recipes are things that I can make *real* quick. Even my "sweets" recipes are not loaded with a bunch of sugar that I don't want. I like feeling energized after I eat!

Frozen Greek Yogurt
Fat-free plain Greek yogurt
Some whipped cream if you want to make it more airy
1 scoop protein powder
Throw in some fruit or dark chocolate chips
Freeze for at least 20 minutes

Peanut Butter Protein Pudding
2 tbsp peanut butter
1 tbsp protein powder
Milk added to your preferred texture
Honey to taste
Top with dark chocolate chips, fruit, etc.

Protein Smoothie Bowl (so easy to make a wide variety!)
Blend:
2 C ice
2 C frozen strawberries
1 scoop protein
Start with ½ C milk of choice
Slowly add water and scrape the sides as needed

Protein Smoothie Bowl No. 2
Blend:
70g frozen banana
70g frozen strawberries
1 scoop protein powder
2/3 C milk of choice
Lots of ice!
Top with banana, ground flax seeds, peanut butter powder, etc.

Green Protein Smoothie Bowl
Blend:
frozen spinach
half frozen banana
PB2 powder
1 scoop protein powder
Add choice of milk or water; continuously add ice & blend to your preferred consistency

Chicken Salad
Grilled chicken breast, cut up or shredded
Greens of choice (I use pre-packaged mixed greens)
Vegetables such as grape tomatoes, cucumber, avocado, etc.
Feta cheese
Homemade salad dressing: olive oil, vinegar, & salt

WATER

I know you've heard it before, but I'm going to tell you again…drink water. ☺

Consuming an adequate amount of water benefits the body in the following ways:

- Fluid retention is alleviated.
- Liver functions improve, increasing the percentage of fat used for energy.
- Natural thirst returns.
- Metabolic functions improve.
- Nutrients are distributed throughout the body.
- Body-temperature regulation improves.
- Blood volume is maintained.

The importance of hydration really cannot be stressed enough. The body does not adapt to dehydration, which impairs every physiologic function. Dehydration decreases performance, cardiac output, and sweat rate; it increases heart rate, core temperature, and water and sodium retention.

Maybe you think since you're not thirsty, you don't need to drink water. However, thirst is a poor indicator of how much water is needed.

Sedentary men and women should drink on average 3 liters (about 13 cups) and 2.2 liters (about 9 cups) of water per day, respectively.

Additionally, it is recommended to drink 14 to 22 ounces of water 2 hours before exercise, and drink 6 to 12 ounces of water every 15 to 20 minutes of exercise.

It is also important to drink plenty of water after exercise. You want to replace liquid that is lost through sweat and urine.

Labeling my water bottle to track my intake helps to keep me accountable. You can label your own bottle, or buy a bottle, with times by which you should have drank a certain amount of water.

Drinking an adequate amount of water will keep you energized throughout the day, as well as improve your workouts AND your sleep!

SLEEP

Sleep is another thing that the body needs in order to function correctly.

When we do not get an adequate amount of sleep, our body actually releases hormones which *increase our feeling of hunger* and *decrease our feeling of fullness*. In other words, sleep-deprived people lose their hunger control.

In many sleep studies, "sleep-deprived" groups are given 5 hours of sleep – an amount people often see as sufficient. Studies have also found that sleep-deprived people had increased cravings for sweets, heavy carbohydrate-rich foods like pasta and bread, and salty snacks.

Getting adequate sleep affects so much more than just your energy the next day; it affects what you eat and how much you eat! Do you really feel like exercising when you're absolutely exhausted? It's a lot harder to motivate yourself in that state. Make sure you are getting at least 8 hours of sleep, and give yourself 30 minutes to actually settle into bed and fall asleep.

Try these tips from sleep expert, Matt Walker, PhD, to enhance the quality and quantity of your sleep:

- **Regularity**: Go to sleep at the same time each night, no matter what day. Your brain has a master 24-hour clock; it expects regularity! Try using a reminder on your phone telling you when it's time for bed!

- **Temperature**: Keep it cool in your bedroom! Your brain and body need to drop their core temperature in order to initiate and remain asleep. The current recommendation is around 65 degrees F.

- **Darkness**: We need darkness to trigger the release of melatonin, a hormone that regulates healthy timing of our sleep. In the last hour before bed, stay away from screens and dim down the lights.

- **Walk it out**: Don't stay in bed awake for long periods of time. If you've been trying to fall asleep for 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something else. This encourages the brain to dissociate your bed with wakefulness.

- **Monitor alcohol and caffeine consumption**: Stay away from caffeine in the afternoon and the evening; and don't go to bed too tipsy!

- **Wind-down routine**: We tend to expect that we can go right from 100 to 0 in a minute. However, it takes time for your brain to wind down! In the last hour before bed, disengage from your phone and computer, and find something that helps you relax.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do carbs make me fat?
No! Carbohydrates provide energy for the body, aid in metabolism of fats, spare muscle proteins, and provide essential fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Excess of any nutrient, carbohydrate, fat, protein, or alcohol over daily calorie needs will cause weight gain.

Does eating at night make me fat?
No. Weight gain is a result of eating more calories than you burn on a regular basis, not the timing of when you eat. Eat in a manner that makes you feel best.

What's better for weight loss: low-fat, high-carb diets OR low-carb, high-protein diets?
Neither. One study examined four popular weight-loss diets, two of which were these restrictive diets. The restrictive diets had higher dropout rates than the others, and the weight-loss average among subjects was the same after 1 year regardless of the diet program. The more restrictive the diet was, the harder it was for participants to adhere to.

Is a very low-calorie diet a good way to lose weight?
A very low-calorie diet is considered anything under 1000-1200 calories per day. These should only be done under proper medical supervision. Some of the risks of a very low-calorie/overly-restrictive diet include:

- Increased risk of malnutrition
- Poor energy and inability to complete a fitness program
- Inability to reintroduce "forbidden foods" in a moderate manner
- Side effects such as nausea, fatigue, constipation, or diarrhea

Is consuming a high-protein diet better for muscle gain?
The body needs the correct amount of protein, carbohydrate, and fat to grow, maintain, and repair itself.

Resistance training, and to a certain extent all exercise, increases the need for repair material.

Therefore, an active individual needs more protein than a sedentary individual. The right amount of protein, along with resistance training, will support muscle growth, and an excess of protein above total calorie needs will be stored as body fat.

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