

# PFC balanced eating guide

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# what is PFC?

PFC is an acronym for the macronutrients in your food: "protein, fat and carbohydrates." PFC eating refers to *real, whole foods* eaten most of the time in healthy balance at all meals and snacks.

A little background: nutrients are substances used for energy, growth and bodily functions by all organisms. Depending on the nutrient, these substances are needed in small amounts or larger amounts. Those that are needed in large amounts are called macronutrients. Those that are needed in small amounts (but are no less important!) are called micronutrients. Proteins, fats and carbohydrates are the three macronutrients we need in large amounts to support our body, brain and metabolism.

Protein is a building block for many neurotransmitters (brain signals), and has the ability to increase our metabolism. Fat supports brain function, keeps us full and acts as a buffer for carbohydrates by slowing down their assimilation into the bloodstream. Carbohydrates give us quick energy, restore fuel to our muscles after exercise, and promote the storage of vitamins and minerals in cells because of their effect on blood sugar and insulin response.



# what does it mean to eat PFC?

PFC eating means choosing real, whole foods most of the time and having all three of these macronutrients in a healthy balance at all meals and snacks.

Eating "real, whole foods" means you choose foods in their most natural form and limit the amount of refined and processed ingredients you consume. Not only does this ensure you get all the things you need (read: vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, fiber) to perform your best, but it also limits the amount of unnecessary stress your body might endure to break down, absorb and metabolize triggering ingredients into the system.

As you may know, many diets focus on restricting or completely eliminating a macronutrient, but the truth is your body needs and works best when it has them all. Throughout this guide, proteins include meat, fish, poultry and eggs; fats include olive oil, coconut oil, butter, nuts, seeds, olives, avocados and coconut milk; and carbohydrates include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Many foods contain one or more macronutrients, so in order to determine which macronutrient category the food falls into, look at nutrition labels to see which nutrient the food contains most of and we'll refer to this as a food's "dominant macronutrient."



## what does it mean to eat PFC?

Sure, you can make any meal a PFC one but we're focused on eating to support whole body health and wellness. Technically, any of the following could "count" as a PFC balanced meals a hotdog (protein + fat) on a white bun (carbohydrate) deep fried chicken wings (protein + fat) served with french fries (carbohydrate + fat) spaghetti (carbohydrate) with sausage (protein + fat) and alfredo sauce (fat)

However, these options might not support whole body health and wellness because of their lack of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fiber. They are made of refined, processed ingredients and are not served in the most whole and natural form they could be.

# why should I eat all three macros to make PFC balanced meals?

In short, eating protein, fat and carbohydrate containing foods in balance with each other supports our metabolism and, therefore, our waistline, weight and body size.

Eating PFC balanced at every meal and snack allows for well managed and stable blood sugar. Stable blood sugar is the key to consistent energy levels, positive moods, improved mental clarity, supported metabolism, minimized sugar cravings and fewer hangry episodes.

You see, eating carbohydrates in any form triggers a blood sugar spike and subsequent blood sugar drop due to the action of the storage hormone, insulin.

Sharp spikes in blood sugar lead to rapid insulin release to bring blood sugar down. Much like a rollercoaster, you might imagine the steep peaks and valleys in your blood sugar throughout the day when you eat too many carbohydrates causing sugar to flood the blood (peak), while insulin comes to clear sugar out of the blood and put it in our cells for energy or storage (valley).

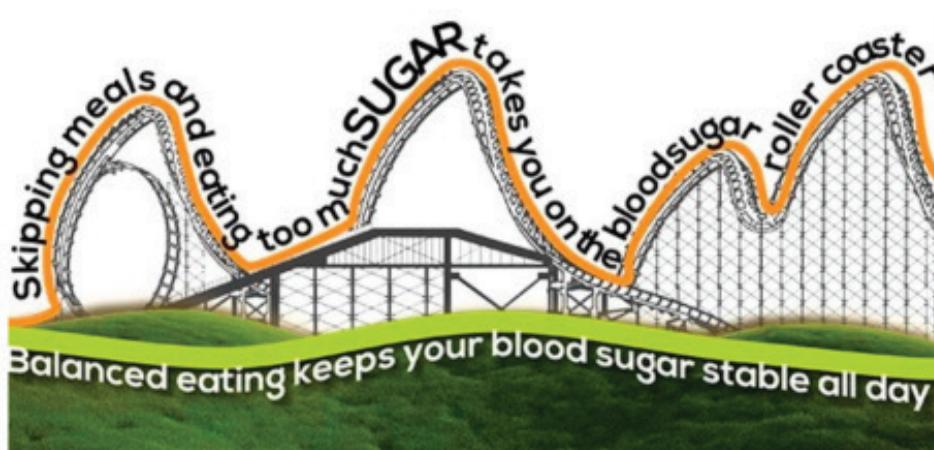


image from Dietitian Cassie from Healthy Simple Life

A day at the amusement park is exhausting - much like it is when you ride a blood sugar rollercoaster all day long. You might feel a mix of tired, anxious, irritable, craving sugar, jittery, or sluggish. So how do we make for a little more calm? Read on.

# how does PFC compare to SAD?

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The Standard American Diet (SAD) is an eating pattern that consists of a high amount of refined carbohydrates, refined and inflammatory oils, low to moderate protein consumption and minimal health fat.

The SAD is a disaster for blood sugar stability.

Carbohydrates (especially the refined kind) are the most consumed macronutrient in the SAD pattern and contribute to high highs and low lows in blood sugar. And a double whammy, consuming carbohydrates with little to no fat sets you up for a wilder ride on the blood sugar rollercoaster.

Riding sugar rollercoasters all day long depletes you of energy and focus and sets you up for weight gain. You know you've been for a ride when you're constantly fighting sugar cravings, having trouble focusing, struggling to fall and/or stay asleep, experiencing mood swings, staving off low energy levels and battling weight gain or having no luck losing weight.

**Blood sugar stability is determined by three variables:**

1. Amount of carbohydrates in a meal
2. Type of carbohydrates eaten
3. Combination of carbohydrates among other macronutrients in a meal

**PFC balanced meals encourage and ensure blood sugar stability.**

**Eating PFC meals addresses those three variables:**

1. The overall amount of carbohydrate in a meal is limited because you're filling up on protein and fat containing foods first.
2. Whole, real type carbohydrate foods have a plethora of vitamins, minerals and fiber which slow down and limit the blood sugar spike. [Think 100% whole grain rice vs. refined grain products like crackers and sugar cereals.]
3. Combining carbohydrate containing foods with protein and fat containing foods in a single meal slows digestion and absorption - limiting the overall speed and spike of blood sugar.

**Enjoy consistent energy and focus, eliminate sugar cravings, stabilize your moods, and achieve and maintain a healthy weight by eating protein, fat and carbohydrate containing foods in balance with each other at every meal.**



# how exactly does eating PFC help with my waistline, weight, and body size?

First, a little background: insulin is an essential hormone that functions to manage blood sugar levels in a tight range. It is required to process sugar from the blood, moving it into cells to be used or stored.

Carbohydrates that make up your favorite whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and legumes (AND not to mention all your sweet treats, desserts, carb-heavy snacks), are broken down to sugar and released into the blood to supply energy to your cells after you chew, swallow, digest and metabolize them. Carbohydrates cause insulin, that storage hormone, to be released and store the carbohydrates you eat, now broken down to sugar, in their simpler form.

Sugar is stored as glycogen in muscles and the liver, or as fat in cells that lie around your internal organs and just above your lean muscle tissue beneath your skin. Sugar is used by all our cells for immediate energy, but when we don't immediately need it, it's stored. And we have an endless ability to store sugar as fat.

If we can manipulate the release of insulin, then we can control the storage of fat in our body. Good news! We can absolutely manipulate the release of insulin by aiming for PFC balanced meals made with real, whole food ingredients.



# how exactly does eating PFC help with my waistline, weight, and body size?

If you remember, eating a moderate amount of from real, whole food types and combining them to create balanced meals means we prevent sharp blood sugar spikes.

The more carbohydrate a food contains, the more insulin is required to put glucose away into storage. And the more insulin released in response to carbohydrates in our food, the higher likelihood sugar will be stored as body fat. High carbohydrate containing foods such as pastas, pastries, and refined bread products require a lot of insulin hormone to process the sugar from the blood, thus, making it likely that the sugar is stored away as fat.

The sharper the blood sugar spike, the more insulin hormone is required to put that extra sugar away into our cells, so if we eliminate the sharp blood sugar spikes, we can better prevent fat storage. Storing less fat on our frame means a smaller waist, lighter weight, and leaner body size.



# PFC foods guide

Check out my resources that range from least detailed to most detailed and are designed to help you understand how to shape PFC balanced meals from real, whole food.

## carbohydrates

### non-starchy vegetables:

- ✓ arugula
- ✓ asparagus
- ✓ bell peppers
- ✓ bok choy
- ✓ broccoli
- ✓ brussel sprouts
- ✓ cabbage
- ✓ cauliflower
- ✓ celery
- ✓ collard
- ✓ cucumber
- ✓ eggplant
- ✓ green beans
- ✓ greens
- ✓ kale
- ✓ lettuce
- ✓ mushrooms
- ✓ onion

- ✓ radish
- ✓ spinach
- ✓ tomato

- ✓ zucchini

### starchy vegetables:

- ✓ all squash
- ✓ corn
- ✓ peas
- ✓ pumpkin
- ✓ sweet potato/  
yam

### all fresh, frozen fruit

### whole grains

### grain-products

- ✓ rice
- ✓ quinoa
- ✓ barley
- ✓ oats
- ✓ wheat

## fats

### whole food fats:

- ✓ avocado
- ✓ almonds
- ✓ cashews
- ✓ hazelnuts
- ✓ pecans
- ✓ pistachios
- ✓ walnuts
- ✓ peanut butter
- ✓ almond butter
- ✓ coconut meat
- ✓ coconut milk
- ✓ (canned)
- ✓ olives
- ✓ flax seeds
- ✓ pumpkin seeds
- ✓ sesame seeds
- ✓ sunflower
- ✓ seeds

### cooking fats:

- ✓ butter
- ✓ ghee
- ✓ coconut oil
- ✓ olive oil

### full fat dairy:

- ✓ heavy cream
- ✓ sour cream

## proteins

- ✓ chicken breast
- ✓ chicken thigh
- ✓ ground chicken
- ✓ turkey breast
- ✓ turkey leg

- ✓ ground turkey
- ✓ salmon
- ✓ tuna
- ✓ tilapia
- ✓ shrimp

- ✓ beef loin
- ✓ pork loin
- ✓ pork chop
- ✓ lamb chop
- ✓ wild game

- ✓ jerky
- ✓ whole eggs
- ✓ Greek style yogurt
- ✓ cottage cheese

# PFC venn diagram

## PROTEIN

bison | beef loin | chicken (boneless, skinless) | deli meat | egg whites | ground turkey (lean %) | ground beef (lean %) | halibut | lamb chops | pork loin | protein powder | scallops | shrimp | tilapia | tuna

bacon | bone-meats | cuts with skin | cheese | ground turkey (fatter 1%) | ground beef (fatter 1%) | whole eggs | salmon | most cut Oysters | steak | pork | sausage

fat free milk | fat free cottage cheese | fat free Greek yogurt | dried meats | beans | lentils | peas

nuts | seeds | nut or seed butters | half and half | full fat milk | full fat cottage cheese | full fat Greek yogurt | protein bars

butter | cream | coconut milk | coconut oil | egg yolks | mayonnaise | olive oil | sour cream

avocado | coconut | meat | olives

all fruits | all vegetables | oats | popcorn | rice

## FATS

## CARBOHYDRATES

# portion guide

## by macronutrient

### 25 G PROTEIN



- 5-6 ounces of meat, fish, poultry



- 1 cup of protein-rich dairy like Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, and liquid egg whites

### 15 G FAT



- 1 Tbsp of butter, oils



- 2 Tbsp of nut and seed butters



- 1/4 cup whole nuts and seeds, coconut milk, coconut cream



- 1/2 cup olives, coconut

### 25 G CARBOHYDRATE



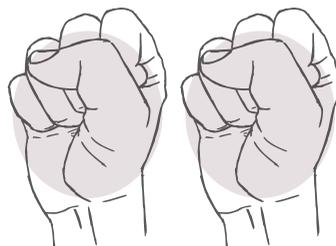
- 1 cup of strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, oranges



- 1/2 cup diced peaches, pineapples, tangerines, pears, mango, papaya, banana, rice, quinoa, oats, potatoes



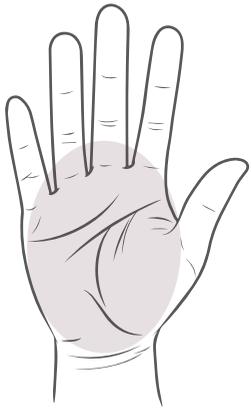
- 1/4 cup dried fruit



- 2 cups grapefruit, watermelon, non-starchy vegetables

# portion guide

## by size



- 5-6 ounces of meat, fish, poultry



- 1 cup of protein-rich dairy like Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, and liquid egg whites
- 1 cup of strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, oranges



- 1 Tbsp of butter, oils



- 2 Tbsp of nut and seed butters



- 1/4 cup whole nuts and seeds, coconut milk, coconut cream
- 1/4 cup dried fruit



- 1/2 cup olives, coconut
- 1/2 cup diced peaches, pineapples, tangerines, pears, mango, papaya, banana, rice, quinoa, oats, potatoes



- 2 cups grapefruit, watermelon, non-starchy vegetables

# let's practice: 5 steps to PFC eating

List some of your favorite protein, fat, and carbohydrate containing foods in the area below. Hint: if you need some ideas for real, whole food PFC ingredients, see the PFC Foods Guide or PFC Venn Diagram.

1

How would you “mock” example meals by combining three macronutrients together? Use the area below to build your meal or snack.

2

Prioritize protein. Look over your example meals - is there at least a palm size portion, or about 20-25 grams per meal? Hint: if you need help figuring out what 20-25 grams of protein looks like, see the PFC Portion Guide.

3

Don't be afraid of fat. Look over your example meals - is there at least 1-2 thumb-sized portions or about 10-15 grams per meal? Hint: if you need help figuring out what 20-25 grams of protein looks like, see the PFC Portion Guide.

4

If you've chosen refined or high sugar carbohydrate foods, what can you swap to make that carbohydrate portion more nutrient rich, instead? Use the area below to illustrate any swaps you need to make.

5

# here's my answer key: *I've done this exercise for you using foods I like to eat.*

List some of your favorite protein, fat, and carbohydrate containing foods in the area below. Hint: if you need some ideas for real, whole food PFC ingredients, see the PFC Foods Guide or PFC Venn Diagram.

# 1

(P) Eggs, ground turkey, Greek yogurt, chicken thighs; (F) olive oil, avocado, cheese, almonds, peanut butter; (C) sweet potatoes, mixed berries, rice, steel cut oats

How would you “mock” example meals by combining three macronutrients together? Use the area below to build your meal or snack.

# 2

(Meal example 1) eggs + cheese + diced sweet potatoes; (meal example 2) ground turkey + olive oil + rice; (meal example 3) Greek yogurt + almonds + mixed berries

Prioritize protein. Look over your example meals - is there at least a palm size portion, or about 20-25 grams per meal? Hint: if you need help figuring out what 20-25 grams of protein looks like, see the PFC Portion Guide.

# 3

(Meal example 1) 3 eggs have about 20 grams protein; (meal example 2) 4-5 ounces of ground turkey has about 25 grams protein; (meal example 3) 1 cup Greek yogurt has about 25 grams protein

Don't be afraid of fat. Look over your example meals - is there at least 1-2 thumb-sized portions or about 10-15 grams per meal? Hint: if you need help figuring out what 20-25 grams of protein looks like, see the PFC Portion Guide.

# 4

(Meal example 1) 3 egg yolks and ½ ounce of cheese has about 15 grams of fat; (Meal example 2) 1 thumb size portion of olive oil has about 10 grams of fat; (Meal example 3) ¼ cup almonds has about 10 grams of fat

If you've chosen refined or high sugar carbohydrate foods, what can you swap to make that carbohydrate portion more nutrient rich, instead? Use the area below to illustrate any swaps you need to make.

# 5

Examples could include: Swap out tortilla burrito for a bed of vegetables or brown rice, swap sweetened granola for a no-sugar added, whole grain cereal, swap pasta for baked sweet potato, swap packaged crackers for a piece of whole fruit

# check yourself

I am no stranger to blood sugar rollercoasters and in my early twenties (while going to school to become a Registered Dietitian no less!) I spent a lot of time feeling lousy because I couldn't seem to get off the ride.

Please don't waste any more time struggling with low energy, chasing hunger, or fighting the last few pounds around your midsection. It's time to shape an eating pattern you can see yourself eating for a lifetime because you understand it and it makes you feel great. Eating PFC balanced meals can absolutely help you break up with:

- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Sugar cravings
- ✓ Hunger (or hangry!), even if you've just eaten a couple hours prior
- ✓ Mental fog and limited focus
- ✓ Feeling fluffy and puffy around your midsection

Let's chat through your experience! [Check out my website](#) to get more balanced eating resources, tips, tricks and hacks.

