



# DIY MACROS GUIDE

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO  
SETTING YOUR TARGET MACROS



# before you get started

Flexible dieting is the only method that offers the structure people need, while also promoting choice and autonomy. I would bet that you basically know what to eat, but you struggle to know how much is appropriate for you. Tracking macros and eating to your specific needs can take the mystery out of that question. This method will put you in the driver's seat of your nutrition so you can achieve your health, body composition and athletic performance goals—while living a life you actually enjoy.

**Some of the results my clients experience when they start tracking macros and eating their favorite foods to hit their macro targets:**



increased and consistent energy throughout the day



decreased muscle soreness, enhanced recovery from exercise



fewer cravings for sugar and carbohydrate-rich foods



increased fullness and satiation after meals



ditched diet mindset and “all or nothing” mindset



fewer hangry episodes



better and deeper sleep



clearer and brighter skin

# here are some assumptions I'm making about you:

- ▶ You're not an elite athlete - you like to be active but working out is not your job!
- ▶ You want to get and stay fit as you age.
- ▶ You want to feel strong and actually look like you workout!
- ▶ You love to eat and if you could eat more to have more energy, see more muscle definition and strength - you definitely would!
- ▶ You want to figure out how to eat to lose weight or body fat, without compromising your metabolism, hormones and, if possible, without feeling like total garbage!

## good news!

You can do this with flexible dieting by tracking macros.

### Consider these factors for getting the most out of this method:

- 1. It's always best to be eating as much food as possible for happy hormones,** a healthy metabolism and great energy. Err on the side of a slight calorie deficit rather than a drastic one (psst! This is outlined on [page 7](#)).
- 2. Prioritize strength training.** One of the biggest determinants of energy expenditure is the amount of lean muscle mass on your frame. See the metabolism resource on [page 14](#) at the end of this downloadable to learn more!
- 3. Understand your average NEAT per day or per week.** Aim to maintain at least this NEAT average for the entirety of a calorie deficit phase. See the metabolism resource on [page 14](#) at the end of this downloadable to learn more!
- 4. Prioritize sleep.** Sleep influences food cravings, systemic inflammation, hormone balance, and tolerance for carbohydrates. Getting 8-10 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night will do far more than any supplement or fancy meal timing strategy ever could.
- 5. Be data curious!** On a weekly or bi-weekly basis, assess body composition changes with tape measurements and progress pictures. Record subjective feedback like adherence to nutrition and exercise protocols, stress, sleep, energy, hunger, and mood.

# personalize your macro prescription

**So you're ready to start tracking your macros and eating in a balance that fuels and supports you great!**

There are a TON of free online macro calculators that take into account a number of factors like age, sex, activity level, current weight, ideal weight, and body fat percentage - but many will make your head spin. Try putting your information into 3 different calculators and you'll get 3 different sets of numbers. **Which do you follow? That's hard to decide when you're a newbie!**

You might find that my macro formula delivers different targets for you than other free online calculators. This is because I ask you to keep your choice type of physical activity, health history and food preference in mind. **Clients are far more successful using a personalized formula** like this because they find they actually enjoy eating to their macro targets - it feels right! **Here are some examples:**

- ▶ you might have hormone issues that make you less tolerant of carbohydrates, you might set your carbohydrates lower than someone who does not have the same tolerance issues.
- ▶ you prefer long-distance endurance activities so you'll want to emphasize a higher percent of calories coming from fat to fuel you without causing blood sugar roller coasters.
- ▶ you are a vegetarian, leaning on plant-based sources of protein, so you'll set your carbohydrate targets higher to accommodate your food preferences.

**When it comes to nutrition changes to produce results, the one thing that matters most is consistency.** If you love the way you eat and how you feel when you hit your targets, you will be consistent with this method. That consistency will bring the health, body composition and athletic performance changes that you're looking for.





# let's calculate your macros

**1** Determine the number of calories it takes to support your metabolism at rest. This is your BMR or your Basal Metabolic Rate.

**Women BMR**

$$\boxed{\phantom{000}} + \boxed{\phantom{000}} - \boxed{\phantom{000}} - 161 = \boxed{\phantom{000}}$$

(10 x weight in kg)      (6.25 x height in cm)      (5 x age in years)      estimated calories burned at rest

**Men BMR**

$$\boxed{\phantom{000}} + \boxed{\phantom{000}} - \boxed{\phantom{000}} + 5 = \boxed{\phantom{000}}$$

(10 x weight in kg)      (6.25 x height in cm)      (5 x age in years)      estimated calories burned at rest

This is your BMR.



2

Determine the number of calories it takes to support your metabolism + your physical activity. This is an estimation of how many calories it takes to maintain your current body weight considering your current physical activity level.

$$\text{BMR X Activity Factor} = \boxed{\phantom{000000}} \leftarrow \begin{array}{l} \text{This is your Total Daily} \\ \text{Energy Expenditure or} \\ \text{your calculated TDEE} \end{array}$$

Total calories per day

Activity factors take into account your day-to-day movement and planned exercise.

Consider the following Activity Factors:

**1.2** If you're sedentary, you work at a desk job and do very little exercise or housework

**1.375** If you're lightly active, you go for long walks 1-3 days per week or do housework like cleaning and gardening

**1.55** If you're moderately active, you're moving most of the day and/or exercise with a moderate to intense amount of effort 3-4 days of the week

**1.725** If you're very active, you're vigorously exercising with a moderate to intense amount of effort 5-6 days per week or playing sports most days

Most people will probably fall into this category or the next one up - you work a sedentary job, but you train hard. Or, you train moderately, but you also have a job where you stand on your feet all the time or get intentional movement throughout your day.

**1.9** If you're extra active, you're participating in vigorous exercise 6-7 days per week, such as a training athlete plus a job which requires physical exertion

It's tough to estimate how many calories you exert during the day, or which activity factor to use (especially if you're intending to start a new exercise plan or are new to strength training). **I recommend that you commit to one activity factor** (don't think too hard about this!) and move on to the next step.

If you're trying to lose body fat, create a slight calorie deficit by moving to Step 3. If you're new to track-ing macros, you'd rather eat for weight maintenance, eat for lean muscle gain and fat loss (termed recomposition), and/or to support great athletic performance, skip step 3 and go right to step 4.

The calories you've found on this page (BMR X Activity Factor) are what we estimate to be your maintenance calories. Be open to the fact that they actually may be higher, however. The best way to know you're eating at maintenance calories, or eating at what your body needs, is that your scale weight is fairly stable - it is not trending up or down over several weeks. If you've been eating more than the estimated maintenance calories found on this page, and maintaining your weight for several weeks and months, that's a sign your calorie needs are actually higher than estimated here. Those with higher calorie needs than estimated by standard equations are usually those with more muscle mass on their frame. If that's you, we recommend that you use your current calorie average (not the one you found in this worksheet) as your TDEE moving forward in this guide.

# 3

## Find a calorie target to match your goals.

Calorie deficits are created by decreasing calories anywhere from 10-20% from maintenance calories. The goal is always to be eating as much food as possible while seeing fat loss results, which means creating a slight to moderate calorie deficit, rather than a very drastic calorie deficit. A slight to moderate calorie deficit keeps hormones happy and metabolism healthy while still allowing you to reach your goals for fat loss.

Another way to look at this is, if you are seeing results with a 10% deficit, you would not increase the deficit. If you are not seeing results with a 10% deficit, you would increase the deficit to 15% and continue to monitor progress.

Here's how you create your calorie deficit for fat loss:

### creating a 10% deficit

**This is best for people who:**

- want to gain lean muscle and lose body fat at the same time (recomposition)
- for people who have some body fat to lose and have a regular routine of strength training with progressive overload
- for people who have not eaten to their needs for months or years usually due to chronic dieting

TDEE x 0.90 =

### creating a 15% deficit

**This is best for people who**

- have a lot of body fat to lose (35%+ body fat or more)
- are new to strength training with progressive overload
- are coming back from significant time off from strength training (6+ months)

TDEE x 0.85 =

### creating a 20% deficit

**This is best for people who**

- have a lot of body fat to lose (35%+ body fat or more)
- are mostly sedentary with little to no physical activity routine

TDEE x 0.80 =



**Examples:** Person who has a TDEE of 2100 calories.

**10% deficit**

$2100 \times 0.90 = 1890$

**15% deficit**

$2100 \times 0.85 = 1785$

**20% deficit**

$2100 \times 0.80 = 1680$

**4** Find your protein.

Target Daily Calories  $\times .30 =$  calories from protein per day/4  $=$   grams protein per day

**OR**

Total Body Weight  $\times 1$  g protein  $=$   grams protein per day

**Check yourself:** take the lower of these numbers



# 5

## Find your range of carbohydrate grams per day.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Target} \\ \text{Daily} \\ \text{Calories} \end{array} \times .35 \text{ -} .45 = \begin{array}{l} \text{calories from} \\ \text{carbohydrate} \\ \text{per day}/4 \end{array} = \boxed{\phantom{0000}} \\ \text{grams} \\ \text{carbohydrates} \\ \text{per day}$$

### CHECK YOURSELF: ASK YOURSELF A FEW QUESTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO PICKING YOUR EXACT CARBOHYDRATE GOAL PER DAY:

Do you love carbohydrate-rich foods more than you love fat-rich foods? Would you miss carbohydrate-rich foods more if you were limited?



**IF YES,**  
choose higher  
carbohydrate range

Do you have a history of blood sugar regulation issues? Do you suffer from hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia throughout the day?



**IF YES,**  
choose lower on the  
carbohydrate range

Are you participating in HIIT, metabolic conditioning, heavy weight lifting or strength training more often than steady-state cardio activity?



**IF YES,**  
choose higher on the  
carbohydrate range

Are you participating in endurance activities that are usually steady state in nature (distance running, cycling, swimming, rowing) more often than HIIT, metabolic conditioning, heavy weight lifting or strength training?



**IF YES,**  
choose lower on the  
carbohydrate range

Do you have a sedentary desk job that takes up 30-50 hours of your average week?



**IF YES,**  
choose lower on the  
carbohydrate range

Do you prefer a vegetarian or vegan eating pattern? You'll need to accommodate more carbohydrates in order to meet protein goals.



**IF YES,**  
choose higher on the  
carbohydrate range

**I know you've heard a lot about carbohydrates in the health and wellness space.** Truth is, you need carbohydrates to fuel your exercise properly and recover well, but too many, especially in the context of a sedentary lifestyle or when you have blood sugar regulation issues, might mean you hinder fat loss. Don't let this step stop you up - make a decision and move on! You can adjust at a later date.

# 6

## Find your fats.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Target} \\ \text{Daily} \\ \text{Calories} \end{array} - \begin{array}{l} [( \text{protein grams} \times 4 ) + \\ ( \text{carbohydrate grams} \times 4 ) ] \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \text{calories from} \\ \text{fat per day} / 9 \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \boxed{\phantom{0000}} \\ \text{grams fat} \\ \text{per day} \end{array}$$

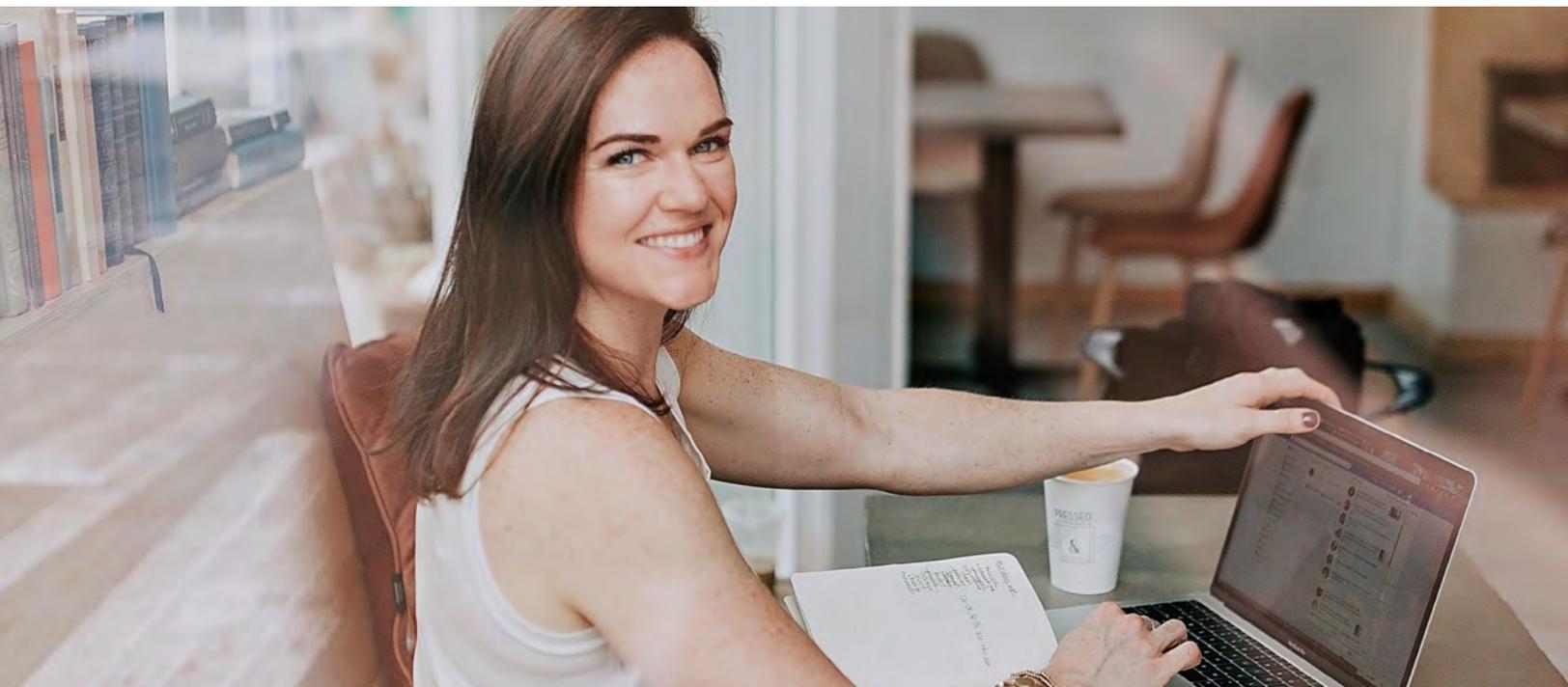
Your answer from Step 4 =  are your grams of protein per day

Your answer from Step 5 =  are your grams of carbohydrate per day

Your answer from Step 6 =  are your grams of fat per day

## what now?

**Try it out!** Change your “goals” section in your food diary to reflect these macro targets. Eat foods you love in meal and snack combinations that add up to these targets every day. Be sure to check out my supplemental resources in this guide to help you get started. I wrote a [step-by-step guide](#) about getting started with macro tracking that you might find helpful as well!



# PFC foods guide

Understanding which foods contain predominantly protein, fat or carbohydrate is the first step in creating PFC balanced meals, and being successful with macro tracking. When eating PFC, it's also important to include mostly whole, real foods, which is what you'll find on this list.

## carbohydrates

### non-starchy vegetables:

- ✓ arugula
- ✓ asparagus
- ✓ bell peppers
- ✓ bok choy
- ✓ broccoli
- ✓ brussel sprouts
- ✓ cabbage
- ✓ carrots
- ✓ cauliflower
- ✓ celery
- ✓ collard greens
- ✓ cucumber
- ✓ eggplant
- ✓ green beans
- ✓ greens
- ✓ kale
- ✓ lettuce
- ✓ mushrooms
- ✓ onions
- ✓ radishes
- ✓ spinach
- ✓ tomatoes
- ✓ zucchini

### starchy vegetables:

- ✓ all squash
- ✓ all potatoes
- ✓ beans (ex green)
- ✓ beets
- ✓ corn
- ✓ parsnips
- ✓ peas
- ✓ pumpkin

### all fresh/frozen fruit

### all whole grains + whole grain products

## fats

### whole food fats:

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

### cooking fats:

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

### full-fat dairy:

- ✓ heavy cream
- ✓ sour cream

## proteins

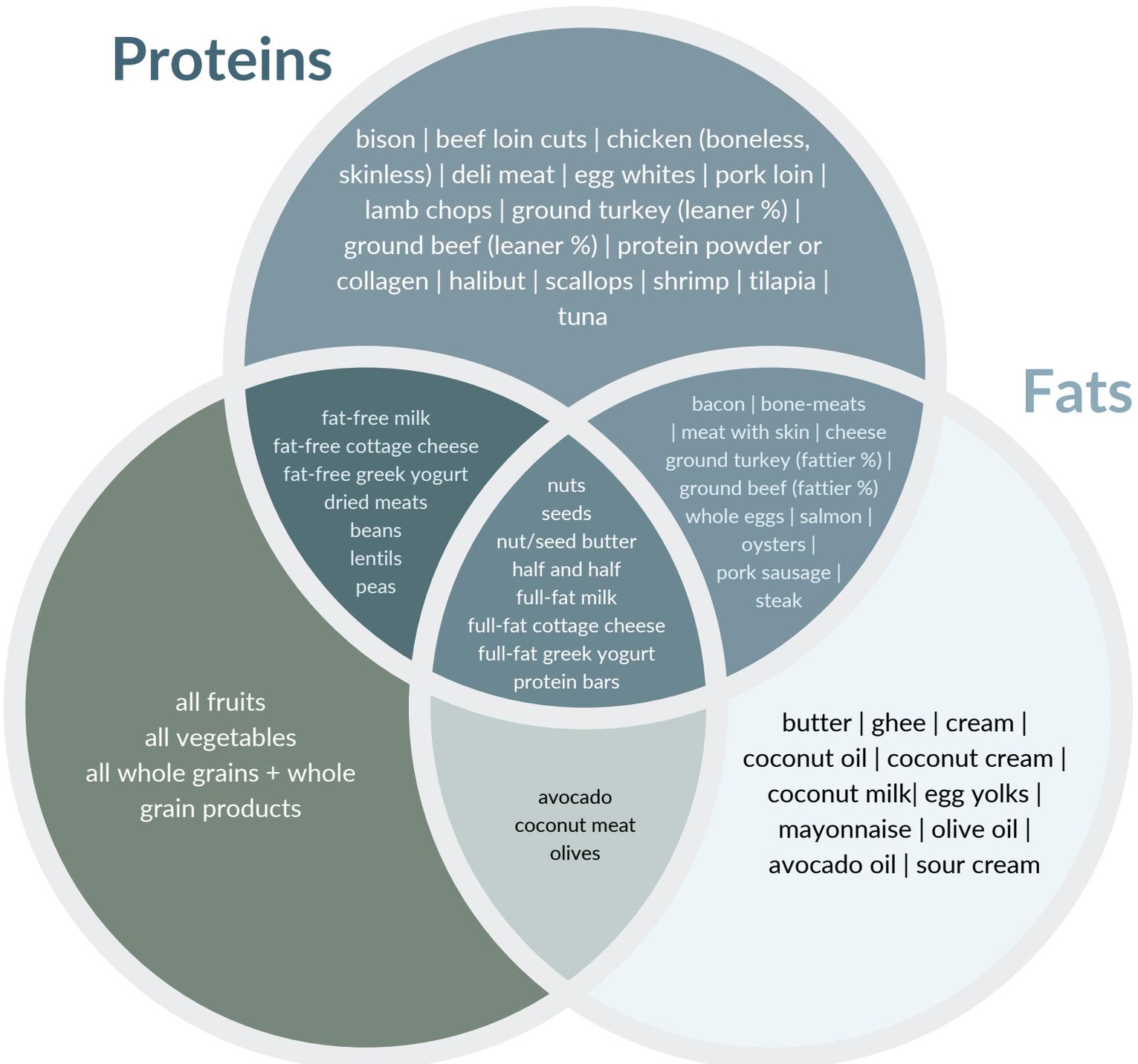
- ✓ chicken breast
- ✓ chicken leg or thigh
- ✓ ground chicken
- ✓ turkey breast
- ✓ turkey leg
- ✓ ground turkey
- ✓ deli turkey
- ✓ ground beef
- ✓ beef loin
- ✓ beef steak
- ✓ beef roast
- ✓ pork chop
- ✓ pork loin
- ✓ ham
- ✓ lamb chop
- ✓ venison
- ✓ wild game
- ✓ jerky
- ✓ whole eggs
- ✓ greek yogurt
- ✓ cottage cheese
- ✓ fish & seafood
- ✓ tofu
- ✓ tempeh
- ✓ edamame
- ✓ protein powder
- ✓ collagen

# PFC venn diagram

While most foods contain predominantly one macronutrient (protein, fat or carbohydrate), some foods contain a mix of macronutrients. This diagram outlines whole foods and what macro or macros they contain.

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## Proteins



## Carbohydrates

# macronutrient portion guide

## 25 G PROTEIN



- 5-6 ounces of meat, fish, poultry



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

## 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

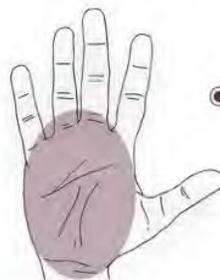


- 1/2 cup olives, coconut

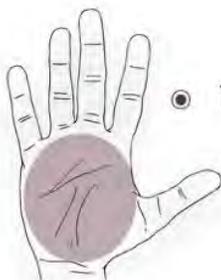
## 25 G CARBOHYDRATE



- 1 cup of strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, oranges



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



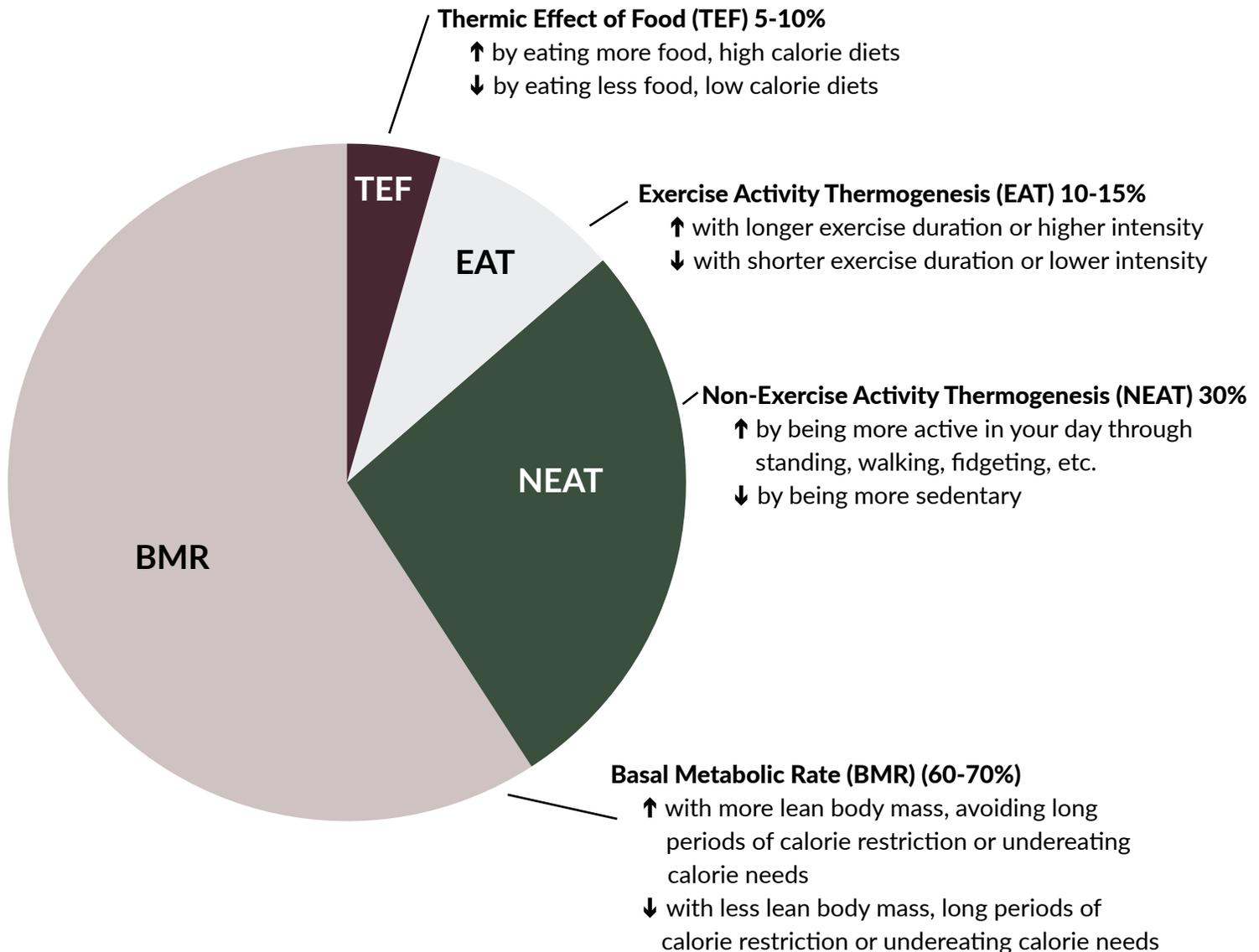
- 1/4 cup dried fruit



- 2 cups grapefruit, watermelon, non-starchy vegetables

# some background on metabolism

Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE), or the amount of calories (read: energy) required to support you and all your bodily functions, depends on several factors - many of which can be manipulated. Let's review the 4 main components of TDEE and how your habits can influence them.



## hear this!

Lean body mass is one of the main determinants of the amount of energy we expend every day because it influences the biggest component of the BMR. Comprised of your bones, ligaments, internal organs and muscles, increasing the amount of lean body mass on your frame can significantly increase your energy output, or calories burned each day. **Want to enjoy more food while maintaining or losing weight?** Prioritize strength training in your workout routine!



# example day menus

Below you will find the 2 example menus from real, whole food that total 1800 calories from 135 g protein, 60 g fat, 180 g carbohydrate. What you will not find is: plain, bland meals. **There is variety and flavor** [or, as a like to say, an anti “chicken + broccoli” plan]. Of course, you will use your personal macro prescription to create your own meals for the day, but I’ve included these menus here as an example of what I might eat on an active day if this was my prescription. **No fancy ingredients, no weird serving sizes, and always a little room for dessert.**

## example menu 1

### meal 1

Breakfast tacos made with egg + liquid egg whites + unlimited non-starchy vegetables like onions, bell peppers, tomato or green chili based salsa, topped with ¼ diced avocado served in 2 corn tortillas

### meal 2

Beef jerky chopped in bite size pieces + dried cranberries brought on-the-go in tupperware

### meal 3

Tuna salad with real mayonnaise served on top of a bed of dark greens + cooked quinoa + cold peas. Served with peaches on the side

### meal 4

Ground turkey stir-fry cooked in olive oil + unlimited non-starchy vegetables like onions, bell peppers, mushrooms, broccoli, served with rice

### dessert

Dove dark chocolate squares

### total macros

138g

protein

61g

fat

185g

carbs

1859

calories



# example day menus

## example menu 2

### meal 1

Smoothie with whey protein + frozen mixed berry medley + liquid egg whites + canned coconut cream

### meal 2

Unlimited non-starchy vegetables + sugar snap peas served with plain Greek yogurt + dry ranch packet

### meal 3

Wrap with deli ham + cheese + unlimited leaf lettuce + mustard another other calorie-free condiment, served with an apple

### meal 4

Roasted chicken thigh + sweet potato, served with side salad topped with olive oil + balsamic vinegar, sunflower seeds, croutons and raisins

### dessert

Strawberries + whip cream

### total macros

133g  
protein

58g  
fat

179g  
carbs

1770  
calories

## full menu details here!

Want to see the complete break down of macros for each meal? Check them out below on in My Fitness Pal!

[menu 1 details](#)

[menu 2 details](#)