

CALORIE & MACRONUTRIENT *tracking*

If you're consuming too **few** or too **many** calories, you can hurt your efforts to achieve your goals. Calculating your calorie needs and tracking your calories / macronutrient intake can be SUPER helpful *if you've hit a plateau, are feeling fatigued or have gained weight (and struggling to lose).*

Put simply, if you're feeling like something needs to change or isn't working... it might be time to lean on tracking as a tool.



Tracking is a tool that can give you real insight so that you can make changes appropriately. It doesn't have to be an everyday thing forever, but it certainly can be if you find it helpful all the time!



I like to think of it as throwing darts blindfolded vs. eyes wide open. Both are challenging... but if your eyes are open (& usable info at your fingertips), you will have a much greater shot at succeeding in YOUR goals.

Keep reading for guidance on determining your calorie needs and tips for tracking your calories (including balancing your macros... carbohydrates, protein & fat).

DETERMINING YOUR *calorie needs*

I prefer the calculator below because it asks for quite a bit of relevant information to give what I believe to be [usually] a pretty accurate estimate of your calorie needs, based upon your goals (keep in mind ALL calculators are *estimates*).

The calorie calculator I recommend using:

[NIH Body Weight Planner](#)



TIPS for greatest accuracy / outcome:

- In Step 1, the last box asks for your PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVEL. Click the "estimate your level" box and select the best fitting options for you -- averaging over most days of the week.
- In Step 3, it asks how much you plan on CHANGING your physical activity level -- make sure you enter 0% if you're sticking with what you have been doing already.
- Once you go through the prompts & you get to RESULTS in Step 4, it will provide you with your calorie needs per day (to maintain your weight, to lose & to maintain your weight loss)... now you are armed and dangerous!

You can always make adjustments - but I recommend you stick with your plan for at least 4 weeks before making other large changes. Remember good things take time.

And they WILL happen. And after those 4 weeks, few months, etc... you'll want to make adjustments again. This calculator is a great place to come to when/if you plateau in the future too.

SETTING YOUR macronutrient goals

Now you have a calorie goal. So how should you break down where those calories are coming from?

In other words, how much PROTEIN, CARBOHYDRATES and FAT do I need (what % of each towards my total calories)?

This will vary from person to person, of course -- but here are some guidelines to help you get started.

1

The most important thing to do FIRST is track (see 'tracking notes' below). Use this information as data you will use to IMPROVE what you're currently doing. So if you track and your average protein intake over 3 days was 22% of your total calories, maybe you make a goal to increase to 25 or 30%.

** You get the idea - remember, small changes not only make a difference but when you can STICK TO SOMETHING, think about the MASSIVE changes that will happen over time (vs. starting a strict, complicated diet/plan that is too hard to stick with in the first place!).

2

If you'd like some guidance regarding your macronutrient goals, a good starting place is a goal of about 1/3 across the board. In other words, 33% of your calories to come from protein, 33% from fat and 33% from carbohydrates. And with these goals, remember I encourage you to prioritize the most nutrient-dense options first to meet your macronutrient needs. See how you feel. Maybe you do better with your carbs higher and fat lower. Or vice versa. But protein needs to be prioritized above all else. Shoot for 20% plus no matter what.

**You don't need to hit your goals perfectly every day. Some days might be higher or lower than others with all of your macros. Think about a 7 day average!

IF YOUR GOAL IS *weight loss...*

The calculator will create a calorie deficit for you.

Even if this number seems CRAZY to you, I want you to try it (especially if you put in accurate info as you went through the calculator steps!).

If you've been consuming 1200 calories or less (as a female) or 1500 or less (as a male), you are most likely hurting your metabolism. You want to avoid eating too few calories for a long period of time because your metabolic rate will actually decrease.

Our bodies have evolved over time to survive – we're very adaptable! So if we eat 1,000 calories / day, our bodies will adjust our metabolic rate to live & function on that amount of calories. And when our VERY SMART & ADAPTABLE bodies do this... our weight loss efforts often come to a halt. It's a defense mechanism because our bodies are smart & built to survive.

So instead, work WITH your body, not against it. Consuming more nutrient-dense calories will give your body the signal that it's okay to burn a few more calories too.

So if weight loss (fat loss) is your goal & it hasn't been happening for you, please consider this and trust me.

By the way... did you catch my MAKE IT HAPPEN podcast episode on "Eat More, Move More?" [Click here](#) & navigate to EP.19

IF YOUR GOAL IS
weight loss...

Did you know?

Research shows protein is POWERFUL when it comes to fat loss.

Yes, FAT LOSS.

If you prioritize protein as you lose weight, you will lose MORE TOTAL FAT and spare muscle loss.

Muscle is so important.

It is probably the #1 anti-aging tool you have in your body.

We lose muscle as we age - more rapidly the older we get. This not only leads to sarcopenia & higher risk of obesity (and obesity-related diseases) but also risk of falls.

Build muscle through exercise & protein intake.

[CLICK HERE](#) for my *free* protein food list.

TRACKING *notes*

I know, tracking can be a total pain (not to mention overwhelming).

So here's what I recommend:



Try tracking everything (ALL foods & drinks you consume - anything with calories) for 2-3 days out of the week. This will give you the ability to see what you're consuming.

Tracking isn't just about LOGGING your calories but about identifying what you're currently doing so that you can make changes that are appropriate (and effective) for YOU.

Tracking provides powerful information for you to use as you set out to make small (& effective) changes.

TRACKING *2*notes

Okay, you've tracked a few days...NOW WHAT?

Let's say you track and you're BARELY putting a dent in your protein goal, that is powerful data to learn! Now you can focus on consuming more protein. Then, a few weeks later, track again and see if you've made some cool improvements.

What tracking tool do I recommend?

I personally use MyFitnessPal or a simple notepad. There are many great tracking apps out there, but pen & paper is easy and I find it quicker than searching for the 'right food' to input.

With that being said, I still use MFP to look up nutrition info (calories, fat, protein, carbs & fiber) for foods that don't have a label (like fresh fruit).

How to measure?

When I'm tracking to obtain accurate data and to achieve certain goals... I use a digital food scale.

[Cheap food scale on Amazon](#)



FAQs

The calculator gave me a number much higher or lower than I'm currently consuming. What do I do?

It's important to *incrementally* increase or decrease your calories to come close to your goal. If the calculator recommends you consume 400 more calories than what you're currently consuming, try adding a 100-200 calorie [healthy] snack each day for a week or two and see how that goes. It's also important to remember it is an ESTIMATE.

What should I enter for the "activity level" in the calculator?

Be sure to hit the 'estimate your level' button in step 1 and be as honest as possible. When in doubt, underestimate your activity level. We often overestimate how active we are which can lead to overnutrition (overeating).

How should my macros fluctuate from day to day?

As I mentioned in this guide, you don't need to hit your macro & calorie goals perfectly daily. There will be fluctuations. An example of this is a very highly active day / hard workout day might be higher in carbs (and lower in fat) to replenish carbs used in activity. And maybe on days where you're less active, you scale back the carbs & have a little more fat instead (always prioritizing protein!).

HUNGRY FOR MORE?

Fitness & nutrition go hand-in-hand. And while I am not a dietitian or nutritionist, I do have *several* nutrition tools available to you.

I have created these tools to guide you to **improving your nutrition & overall health** – which includes everything from disease risk to energy levels & more. *It doesn't have to be complicated – so let's keep it simple.*

Joining my crew gives you access to a number of nutrition tools such as two fasting courses, nutrition videos, tips & tricks and *more*.

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN MY CREW](#)

Making your fitness routine excuse-proof with quick & effective workouts is my #1 priority. But while you're putting in the work & sweating with me... why not compliment it by fueling yourself well?

I'm here to help with all of it.

Sweaty hugs,
Maggie



fitnessmaggie.com