

What are macronutrients

These are the 3 main components of your diet that are used to provide your body with energy: proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

What each of these provide

Protein is responsible for building, maintaining, and repairing body tissue. Physically active people require more protein in their diet to aid in the constant need for muscle repair. All enzymes and hormones in the body are also proteins, which aid in other important biochemical body processes. Protein plays a wide role in our growth, development, and everyday functioning. The recommended daily intake for protein is between .6-1 gram per pound of your body weight. For example, if you weight 130 lbs you should be averaging between 78 and 130 grams per day. This equates to approximately 30 percent of your daily caloric intake.

Fat is needed for our bodies to function, and our body can't produce it on its own. Triglycerides, cholesterol and other essential fatty acids are used to store energy, protect our vital organ and insulate us. Fat is also vital in the digestion and absorption of vitamins. You want more of your diet to consist of healthy un-saturated fats. Saturated and trans fats should be avoided as much as possible. Approximately 30 percent of your daily caloric intake should come from un-saturated fats.

Carbohydrates are broken down and absorbed into the body as glucose, the body's preferred source of energy for physical activity, brain functioning and organ operation. Most foods contain carbs, but you should try to avoid processed foods as much as possible and opt for healthier options like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, which we will get into later. Approximately 40 percent of your daily calories should come from carbohydrates.

Examples of foods that contain protein, fat and carbs

Some of these foods will contain more than one of these macronutrients. For example, meats and fish are a source of protein and fat; legumes and nuts are a source of protein, carbs and healthy fats. This is also not a comprehensive list, but just to give you a good starting point.

Complete proteins: fish, lean beef, turkey, ham, pork, chicken, eggs, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat Greek yogurt, fat-free cheese, fat-free cream cheese, milk

*Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. Diets that include all 20 amino acids are considered complete proteins. Nine of these twenty amino acids are considered essential because our body can not produce them on its own, so we must obtain them in our diet. Complete proteins are found in animal products such as meat, eggs and milk. If you are vegan it's important to note that you can also obtain a complete protein by combining legumes (beans, lentils or peanuts) with a grain (wheat, rice or corn). A simple example

is peanut butter on whole wheat bread, which provides all essential amino acids and a plentiful amount of healthy fats. Here is a list of other examples of vegan-friendly complete protein options.

Fat: nuts, oils, nut butters, avocado, mayo, salad dressings, marinades, coconut, fat from eggs and meats, salmon

Carbohydrates: pasta, popcorn, fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, seeds, nuts

How to use protein, fat and carbohydrates to calculate your macros

DON'T recommend tracking using an app because it will be very "cookie-cutter" instead of tailored to your specific body so your results will be limited.

1. First track all consumption (what you eat and drink) for 1-2 weeks in grams using a food scale, which you can order for cheap on Amazon. The easiest place to store this information is to use a free app on your phone like My Fitness Pal. It's important to note that while tracking you **MAINTAIN** the same level of activity you were doing previously, and continue eating the same way you were previously so as not to way your results.

2. Then after you've tracked for 1-2 weeks weigh yourself first thing in the morning without clothes or shoes. If your weight has a tendency to fluctuate a lot you may want to weigh yourself everyday for this first week at the same time

and same place and then take the average of all of those weigh ins. If your weight has stayed the same you have identified your maintenance calories, which we need for tracking weight loss. If your weight drops by 1-2 pounds then we can safely assume you are approximately 10% under your maintenance and likewise if you gain 1-2 pounds we can assume you are approximately 10% above your maintenance calories.

3. If you lost 1-2 pounds then take the average of your total weekly or two week caloric intake and this is your NEW daily caloric intake amount. You can split up these calories for each week in 1 of 2 ways. The easiest way is to take your weekly caloric goal and divide it by 7 and this is the calorie amount you should be consuming each day. The other option is to preplan your week and you can split up your calories each day however you want as long as you can hit your weekly caloric goal. For example: Let's say you lost 1 pound and your weekly caloric intake was 13,300. You can either divide that by 7 and have to hit 1,900 calories per day or you can split that up and have low calorie days and high calorie days as long as you hit your weekly number.

If your weight stayed the same you need to deduct approximately 10% from your weekly caloric intake. For example, if your weekly intake was 13,300 calories you need to multiply that by 10%, which equals 1,330. Your NEW weekly caloric intake amount is 11,970 (13,300-1,330).

If your weight went up by 1-2 pounds you need to deduct approximately 20% from your weekly caloric intake. If we are using the same example above you would need to now deduct 2,660 calories from 13,300 for your NEW weekly caloric intake amount.

4. Next you need to divide your calories into fats, proteins and carbs using the 40/30/30 rule. In other words, approximately 40% of your calories should be carbohydrates, 30% should be fats and 30% should be protein. The best way to calculate this is to start with figuring out how much protein you need. For every 1 lb of body weight you need approximately 1 g of protein. For example, if you weight 135 lbs you need approximately 135 grams of protein per day. There are 4 calories in each gram of protein so 135 grams equals 540 calories of protein. You can then divide your remaining calories into fats, and carbohydrate based on your level of activity and how well your body responds to carbs. Keep in mind that fats are very caloric so you don't want to go over-board. The easiest rule of thumb if you aren't sure is to stick to the 40/30/30 rule so 30% of your total daily calories will be fats and 40% will be carbs. For example, if your daily caloric goal is 1,900 you would need 570 calories from fat. There are 9 calories per gram of fat so you would need approximately 63.5 grams of fat per day. Your daily caloric intake of carbohydrates is again approximately 40% of your total daily calories so assuming your daily caloric goal is 1,900 it would be 760 calories. There are 4 calories per

gram of carbohydrate so you would need approximately 190 grams of carbohydrates each day.

5. To summarize, now you know if your caloric daily intake goal was 1,900 calories you would need approximately 760 calories from carbs (190 grams), 540 calories from protein (135 grams), 570 calories from fat (63.5 grams).

What foods can you eat if you use up your carbs or fats too fast

If you use up your carbs too quickly you may need to avoid dairy sources of protein, and for your fat you may need to stick to eggs, meats, and oils.

If you use up your fat too quickly you may need to use egg whites, fat-free dairy protein sources or fish as your source of protein. For carbs most fruits, vegetables and grains will be good.

Most people usually don't run out of protein for the day.

The benefits of macro tracking

Macro tracking gives you the benefit of flexible dieting. This means you can be flexible with what you eat as long as you hit your macros. You can have your "cheat meals," aren't limited to a meal plan, don't have to deprive yourself entirely from the foods you love AND will still continue to lose or gain weight depending on your goals. This makes your diet more personal making it much easier to maintain. You also don't have to worry about hitting your macros EXACTLY as long as you are consistently tracking and are coming within a

close margin of your goals each week. The longer you track the easier it becomes to start estimating portion sizes, which really comes in handy when you're dining out.

How to track meals out

The easiest way to track meals that you order out is through your app that you're using to input, store and track your macros such as My Fitness Pal as mentioned earlier. Many restaurants are searchable within the app and from there it will pull the macros for you once you click on that food item. Now, if the restaurant is not in the app you can easily Google what you ate and find the macros. If you can't find exactly what you had do not stress. Simply find a few choices that are close to what you had and take the average of their macros.

It's important to note that your macros will change as you lose or gain weight. These numbers are always based on your weight, which is why it is helpful to have someone help you continue to adjust these numbers for your body as you come closer and closer to hitting your goals. This is a service that we offer.