



Calories & Macros

Calorie: a calorie is a unit of energy. It's a way of describing how much energy your body could get from eating or drinking something, e.g. something contains 100 calories.

Macro: macro is short for macronutrient. It is the three categories of nutrients that you eat the most and provide you with most of your energy: protein, carbohydrates and fats.

Most of us have counted or looked at calories at some point in time. As we heard, **calories in VS calories out** = weight gain or weight loss. Sorry. It's not as simple as that.



2 important basics to remember:

- Calories/energy units from a salad are used and digested differently by your body than calories/energy units from a candy bar!
- If you lose weight by undereating and lots of cardio without strength training, you are more likely to lose muscle and water. The scale will drop quickly. And rise even quicker soon after. Go slowly. Lose body fat instead, and you will see long term results that last.

How to know how many calories and what macro split to eat:

Step 1: measure and take pictures

Step 2: calculate BMR

Step 3: calculate TDEE

Step 4: pick a macro split depending on your goal and body type

Step 5: stick to it for at least 2 weeks. Take pictures and adjust ONLY when needed.

Lucky you! I will be doing steps 2, 3 & 4 for you!

BMR: Basal Metabolism Rate. This is the amount of calories/energy that your body needs to stay alive. This includes breathing, digesting, blinking, and basically everything you need to stay in bed and watch TV. The higher your lean body mass, the higher your BMR.

TDEE: Total Daily Energy Expender. This is the number of calories that you burn on a daily basis by sleeping, eating, exercising, working and living. The total is calculated weekly, then divided by 7 equal or not daily amounts. The more you move, the higher this number is.

To **build muscle** you need to eat in a slight surplus of your TDEE. Your body will use all fuel (food) first to heal, repair, grow, digest and breathe. If all is taken care of then it will start building muscle. Unfortunately, this does not mean eating whatever and whenever you like.

To **lose body fat** you need to eat slightly less than your TDEE while eating enough protein and performing strength training to ensure that you preserve muscle mass.

Maybe you understand that if you eat too little and work out too much you will lose water weight and muscle as your body needs the energy. The numbers on the scale will drop. But in the process, you will reduce your BMR so when you start eating more and/or exercising less you will gain weight again. This is called the YOYO effect.

Macros

I would like to continue to explain what macros are.

Carbohydrates (fiber) are used to fuel your body. I do not believe in cutting macronutrients out completely as the less fuel you have, the less you will be able to achieve (think wood on fire, gas in a car, etc.). Carbs are not bad for you! 1gr of carbs = 4 calories. Do not count only net carbs as they still have calories. It is a marketing trick, not a fact! (Carbs – fiber = net carbs).

Protein is most important macro. You need it to recover and build muscle. Lean muscle mass will burn calories even when you sleep. And in my personal opinion, they make you look even better than you already do. 1gr of protein = 4 calories.

Healthy fat. To maintain a healthy body, you need Omega fats 3, 6 and 9 in moderation and in the right types. Without fats, your hormones will mess with you! 1gr of fat = 9 calories.

Protein is the MOST important, followed by healthy fats, fibre, carbs, and lastly calories.

Macro breakdown. Macros are often tracked in percentages (%).

A great start is 30% protein, 40% carbs and 30% fat = 100% calories

These % of the total calories need to be adjusted over time. Depending on goals, hormones and results this can be weekly, monthly or longer. The absolute best measurement tools are pictures! The scale is the worst tracking device as your body weight can fluctuates up to 5 pounds a day!

Macros and calories do not match. Some days you will have “perfect” macros, but your calories will not be not “perfect”. This happens all the time. Each macro has it own calorie count, but some items are using net carbs, as often happens in the USA. Plus, the FDA allows a rounding for all packaged foods. This is a great reason to cook and bake all your own meals rather than trusting a profit-based company. Look at total macro grams, not calories.



The importance of tracking. Please try and track as accurately as possible. This is not a forever task, but is very helpful at the beginning of your journey. The only way to know if something works towards your goal is consistency.

Tracking: My Fitness pal or Carb manager are great apps to use for tracking macros

MFP tracking tips:

- Use a food scale that weighs grams, ounces, and fluid oz
- Where possible, scan the barcode.
- When available, use the green checkmark on an item.
- If a package of your regular food items has changed, very likely the macros have changed too. This is the time to re-scan or enter before copying from a previous day.
- Plan a day or more in advance: plan, prep, and balance macros, and then eat.
- The desktop version has a few more options than the app. It is worth using sometimes.
- Look at the grams, not the pie chart. The pie chart is not a reflection of the total of grams and %, but only of the already entered grams and %. This is the one downside of the free version.
- The paid version will let you add grams rather than %. It will let you set different goals for different days and refeed days-carb cycling.

Commented [M1]: I don't understand what this means.

"Progress" pictures: Here are some tips. Wear the same outfit (beachwear or tight-fitting pants and a sports bra are preferred). The light source should be from the side. This is a tip to see muscle definition. Take one picture facing forward, one with your back turned to your camera, and one from each side. Try to stand naturally and don't pose. Collect your pictures on an app that allows you to make a collage. (Or send them to me and I will do this for you.)

Seeing your progress is much easier. From this point forward we will be using pictures, not numbers, to recalculate macros and adjust your cardio. I know this might not be your main focus right now, but you might regret not knowing where you started.

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