



FAQs

How do you determine what my daily intake should be?

The recommendation for your daily intake is based on your gender, body type, activity level, and goals.

Do I need to count calories or macros?

No. Assuming you are active and eat about four meals per day, the recommendations in your Custom Meal Plan Template are all you need to follow. These recommendations are to help you more easily meet your macronutrient (protein, carbohydrate, fat) and calorie needs without having to do kitchen math. To measure, I recommend simply using the hand-sized portions which I will describe with your Custom Meal Plan Template. This works well for many reasons.

1. Hands are portable. They come with you to work lunches, restaurants, social gatherings, etc.
2. Hands are scaled to the individual. Bigger people need more food, and tend to have bigger hands, therefore getting larger portions. Smaller people need less food, and tend to have smaller hands, therefore getting smaller portions.
3. It provides reasonable amounts of nutrient dense foods and their specific macronutrients (thus preventing deficiencies). It will help you meet your protein, vegetable, carb, fat, and calorie needs without having to count a gram or weigh a food.

But, if you still want to know about macros and calories, here is the approximate macronutrient breakdown for the hand-sized portions (depending on the size of your hand):

- 1 palm of protein = 20-30g of protein
- 1 cupped hand of smart carbs = 20-30g of carbohydrate
- 1 thumb of fat = 7-12g of fat

And the calorie breakdown:

- 1 gram of protein = 4 calories
- 1 gram of carbohydrate = 4 calories
- 1 gram of fat = 9 calories

Keep in mind that some of your protein sources may also contain some fat and/or carbohydrate (i.e. eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese), some of your fat sources may also contain some protein and/or carbohydrate (i.e. nuts, seeds, avocado), and some of your carbohydrate sources may also contain some fat and/or protein (i.e. quinoa and broccoli). But each food is categorized based on its predominant macronutrient.

How will I know which foods to eat and which foods to avoid?

You will receive a Food Guide which will contain an extensive list of foods to choose from for each category (i.e. protein, smart carbs, vegetables, and fats). When following this plan, you will be encouraged to...

- Base your diet on real, fresh, natural, nutrient-dense foods like meats, eggs and poultry, fish (rich in protein and good quality essential fats) a variety of vegetables (rich in antioxidants and cancer-fighting substances), healthy fats (like olive oil, avocados and coconut), fruit and nuts.
- Avoid empty calories – high-calorie foods and drinks that offer little nutritional value. Eat foods that are natural - not processed
- Steer clear of anything that comes in a box or fancy packaging and is labeled “fat free,” “low fat,” “low carb”, “heart healthy,” etc.
- Pay attention to where your food comes from. Whenever possible, buy meat that is grass-fed, local, organic and pastured, eggs that are organic and pastured, and produce that is locally and organically grown and in season.

Can I eat foods other than those listed on the Food Guide?

Yes, but for optimal results, I recommend sticking to the options listed in the Food Guide. If you have questions about a specific food that is not listed on the Food Guide and where it fits, you can just shoot me an email tracey@moxiecoaching.net

How far apart should my meals be?

Try to eat a meal every 3-5 hours.

How do I count dairy products (i.e. milk, cottage cheese, yogurt)?

Because they contain a good amount of carbohydrate, a single serving of dairy products (non-fat and 1%) should be counted as a “palm” of protein and a “cupped hand” smart carbs. If it’s full-fat dairy, it should be counted as a “palm” of protein, a “cupped hand” of smart carbs and a “thumb” of fat. In other words, if you’d like to be able to add “smart carbs” and/or “healthy fats” to your meals, you’ll want to choose protein sources other than dairy for your meals.

How do I count beans and lentils?

Because they contain a good amount of carbohydrate, a single serving of beans and lentils should be counted as a “palm” of protein and a “cupped hand” smart carbs. In other words, if you’d like to be able to add “smart carbs” to your meals, you’ll want to choose protein sources other than beans and lentils for your meals.

Can I eat whole eggs on this plan?

Yes, but be aware that whole eggs should be counted as a “fat” as well as a “protein.” What that means is, if you eat whole eggs as your protein source for any given meal, you will forego adding any “thumbs” of fat to that meal. You should also limit yourself to only one meal per day with eggs as your sole protein source. In other words, if you’d like to be able to add “healthy fats” to your meals, you’ll want to choose egg whites over whole eggs.

How do I measure out protein powder?

On average, most protein powders contain about 25g of protein per scoop, which could be counted as approximately one (small) “palm” of protein.

Can I drink coffee or tea on this plan?

Yes.

Can I add creamer and/or sweetener to my coffee/tea?

Yes. You can measure out a tablespoon of milk, light cream or half-and-half. But you should steer clear of high-calorie creamers. Stevia is an acceptable substitute for table sugar.

Is “cheating” allowed?

I prefer to call them “treats.” The word cheat has a negative connotation. Saying you cheated implies that you have done something bad. A treat is something that you allow yourself to indulge in from time to time without

guilt because it's delicious and pleasurable. That being said, occasional treats are allowed but should be kept to a minimum. Please see the section on "Cheating" below for details

If I "cheat" do I need to start over back at the beginning?

No! Understand that it's all part of the process. Pause and ask yourself, "How can I learn from this? What can I do differently next time?" Accept that you got off course, learn from it, and move on IMMEDIATELY.

Relapse prevention

The fact that you have stepped up to this challenge is, in itself, a success and proof of how strong you are. It's easy to say you want to improve or be better, but few people actually ever do anything about it. Why?? Because it's hard!!! Your desire to take this step shows that improving your health and well-being is a priority in your life. Congratulations!

Just know that it won't always be easy. You will struggle from time to time. Everyone struggles. It's normal. You are human. The sooner you embrace that and cope with it the happier you will be. You have proven that you have the coping skills and behavior change strategies needed to cope with it, get control, and get back on track quickly.

- **Never be hungry.** If you let yourself get too hungry you are more likely to binge and/or make poor food choices.
- **Eating must be pleasurable and functional.** Experiment with new recipes. Make Google your new best friend!
- **Keep a detailed food log of everything you eat.** Food logs work by increasing accountability and awareness. Remember the B.L.T. Rule: If you bite it, lick it, or taste it, it gets recorded.
- **Decide in advance.** Anticipate occasions where you will be faced with temptation and be prepared with a plan.
- **Plan ahead and be prepared.** Planning and preparation are crucial when it comes to good nutrition. You should always know what, when, and where your next meal will be.
- **Avoid your triggers.** If having it in your house makes it too tempting to avoid, get it out of your house! Out of sight, out of mind.

- **Focus on portion size.** If you mindlessly put food on your plate with no attention to portion size you are more likely to eat more just because it's in front of you. If you measure your portions you may be surprised to find that you don't need as much as you think you do.
- **Think long-term and be realistic.** It's a marathon, not a sprint. Your long-term eating plan needs to be sustainable whether you are at home, dining out, at work, on the road, or on an airplane. The word "diet" comes from the ancient Greek root which means "way of life." It's not to be thought of as simply a short-term period of hunger and deprivation just to fit into a swimsuit.
- **Set some hard, fast rules.** Know *how* you are going to eat each day and *why*. Plan out in advance what an awesome (clean) day of eating will look like. Make a commitment to adhere to your rules no matter what.

“Cheating”

No one can eat a perfect diet 100 percent of the time, nor should they try to. Occasional treats are allowed but should be kept to a minimum. I encourage you predetermine your “treats” ahead of time. Decide right now, in advance. Will you allow yourself three treats per week? Two treats? One treat per week? Will your treats occur on the same day each week or will the days vary based on your agenda? Or will you strive for 100 percent compliance until a treat crosses your path that is really worth eating? Set a goal, write it down and commit to it. Continue to keep a food log and pay close attention to the affect each food has on your progress. You will figure out what you can and cannot get away with. Reassess monthly and make changes as needed.

A Treat Guide...

- **Make it special.** How often do we (over)eat food that doesn't even taste good or satisfy us? Don't eat something just because it's in front of you. If you are going stray from your plan, for crying out loud, make it worth it!
- **Commit to your predetermined treat days.** If I commit to two treats per week and I choose ahead of time that I will enjoy one treat on Tuesday and one treat on Friday... and then someone shows up with a container of homemade chocolate peanut butter buckeyes on Thursday, I *do not* give myself the option of eating one. If they are still available on Friday (maybe) I will eat one then. Just because a treat presents itself unexpectedly that is not permission to get off course!
- **Travel to get it.** If I am really craving a chocolate chip cookie, I don't want just any old cookie. I want a Starbucks chocolate chunk cookie. It just so happens that there is a Starbucks one-half mile from where

we live. So, since I don't keep junk food in the house, I head over to Starbucks and buy one, but only if it's my predetermined treat day. If I have to travel to a destination to get the cookie makes it even more special.

- **Know your triggers.** Don't indulge in something that has the potential to trigger an all-out binge. If you are craving pizza but you know you won't stop until you've devoured the entire pie, pizza is probably not the best choice for you.
- **Write it down.** Record your treats in your food log just as you would any other food. Even better, write down specifically what you plan to eat *before* you eat it. At my favorite restaurant they have a chocolate flourless cake on the dessert menu that I absolutely love. I decide ahead of time that I will share a slice with the person I am with... Sometimes I'll take it a step further and commit to how many bites I will have. When we are through with dinner, and the server presents the dessert menu, I don't give myself the option of ordering a separate dessert for myself or eating more than the predetermined amount. I usually find that I am satisfied with less than I want.
- **Serving size.** Ideally a treat should be a *single* serving of one (or two) off-plan item(s). Common sense should tell you that if you eat a half gallon of ice cream in one sitting it qualifies as a full-out binge. If I am going out to dinner and I want a treat I will order, say, a hamburger (hold the cheese and the bun) with a side of fries (treat = fries). Or, if I want to eat the bun, I'll sub a salad for the fries (treat = bun). Or, if I want dessert, I'll have a piece of lean protein and a salad for dinner and I'll split the dessert with someone (treat = ½ dessert). For more on serving size, check out "Avoid food bombs," below.
- **Portion it out.** Avoid foods in bulk form. If I decide on tortilla chips and guacamole, I need it to be portioned out otherwise I will continue to eat until the entire bag of chips is gone... and I will probably lick the bowl of guacamole clean. Seriously. I will. The solution for me is to pour *one serving* of chips into a bowl and I do the same with the guacamole. The idea is to enjoy the treat without going overboard.
- **Don't eat mindlessly.** Don't pull out a pint of ice cream and a spoon and plop yourself in front of the television (or computer). When you are enjoying a treat ENJOY IT for goodness sake! Why distract yourself from something so delicious!?
- **Avoid food bombs.** Any food (or meal) that contains a combination of off-plan items can be considered a food bomb (think Thanksgiving dinner). Some examples include: a cheeseburger and fries with ketchup (grains, gluten, dairy, potatoes and sugar), pizza (grains, gluten and dairy), a Brownie a la Mode (grains, gluten, dairy and sugar), loaded nachos (corn/grains, dairy, legumes, and God knows what else). A food bomb will probably leave you feeling like... well, like a bomb went off in your gut, and will likely take

longer to recover from. Now I realize this may not always be easy since most delicious treats contain more than one off-plan item. But do the best you can.

- **Space out your treats.** Try to space out your treats over the course of a week. This will have less of an impact on your insulin levels and will be much easier to recover from. Spacing your treats too close together (i.e. dinner on Friday and brunch on Saturday) could potentially take days to recover from and make it that much more difficult to get back on track.
- **Remember, you *always* have a choice.** You are never obligated to eat anything you don't want to eat. Whether you are at a holiday party, a business dinner, or a friend's house for lunch, you are never obligated to eat something just because it's there or because it's offered to you. If you decide *in advance* that it will count as one of your treats for the week that is your choice. But you *always* have a choice. If you are out with a group of friends and everyone lights up a cigarette, would you smoke one if it was offered to you even though you are a non-smoker? Of course not! The same applies to your food choices. It's not rude to politely say "no thank you" to something that you don't want to eat, especially if it's something that you know makes you sick! Anyone who cares about you will understand and respect that.

What to do when you get off track (and you will)...

There will be occasions when you will make extremely poor food choices and/or you will eat more than you should. You may relapse into old, familiar, ineffective and destructive habits that hinder your progress. The difference now is that it should happen much less frequently. But when it does happen you will need to be ready with a plan to help you recover quickly. Use the skills you have learned (that maybe you didn't possess before) to minimize the damage and get back on track.

When a relapse occurs...

You could...

- a) Roll around in guilt and remorse and berate yourself for your "failure" for the next seven days (or more). But that would be very unhealthy and unproductive and would likely lead to a vicious cycle of emotional eating.
- b) Let it completely derail you from your long-term plan. Let's call it the "Fu@k it" effect: the line of thinking that says once you cheat you've blown it so you might as well binge. But that black-and-white thinking would only leave you feeling crappy longer, which will make it that much harder to get back on track.

- c) Understand that it's all part of the process. Pause and ask yourself, "How can I learn from this? What can I do differently next time?" Accept that you got off course, learn from it, and move on IMMEDIATELY.

Which option will YOU choose? (Correct answer: Option 'c')

DOs and DON'Ts

Do NOT rationalize or justify your actions.

Instead...

- Recognize that you had a setback and move on.
- Hold yourself accountable for behavior that is not in line with what you want to achieve.
- Be honest with yourself about the fact that you failed. Take ownership for it and analyze what went wrong.
- Engage in solving the problem and finding a solution.
- Move on to your Recovery Plan immediately.

Do NOT say to yourself:

- *"It could have been worse."*

Of course, it could have. But it also could have been better.

- *"I had a really tough workout today so I can eat this."*

You cannot out-exercise a poor diet. Most people overestimate the number of calories they actually burn during a workout. Even if you could burn off all of the calories consumed during a binge, a workout will not undo the resulting inflammation and gut irritation. Besides, everyone knows that "abs are made in the kitchen, not the gym!"

- *"Life's too short! You only live once."*

That is true. But do you want to just survive.... or do you want to THRIVE?! This is the only body you will ever have in this lifetime. Wouldn't you rather do whatever you can to make it the healthiest body possible?

- *"I'm doing better than I was before."*

That's awesome but it's a slippery slope! It's those kinds of rationalizations that will get you back to square one before you know it. Remember: You are never standing still. Every choice you make is either

moving you closer to or *further from* your goals – and optimal wellness. Practice saying, “I am going to strive to be even better today than I was yesterday and better tomorrow than I am today!”

Do NOT set a date in the future to get back on track.

- Do it right NOW! Otherwise you will find yourself buying time while you rationalize why you shouldn’t get back on track.
- Just because you fall off the wagon on Thursday does not mean you have to wait until the following Monday to get back on track (that goes for all of you Type A personalities out there!)
- The quicker you diagnose your failures by identifying specific behaviors that did or did not happen, the more successful you will be at maintaining your new body.

Have a Plan of Recovery

When I make poor food choices, I feel crappy. When I feel crappy, I default towards foods that are fatty, salty, greasy, sugary... *aaaand* not so healthy. So, I need to decide *before* the failure occurs (and I’m feeling crappy and emotional) how I will handle it when it happens. That means having a Recovery Plan mapped out (and written down) ahead of time. The goal is to interrupt the pattern as quickly as possible. As Dr. Barry Sears says, “you are only as good as your next meal.” You should know *in advance* exactly what your next meal and all remaining meals will look like. Follow it up with a full day of meals that are in line with your new healthy eating philosophy and you will be feeling good again before you know it. (I think it goes without saying, but starving yourself or over-exercising in an attempt to compensate for overindulging is not the solution. It’s unhealthy and counterproductive and will only set you up for a binge later. The same goes for purging, abusing laxatives, or any other attempt to get rid of what you consumed).

Nutrient Timing

Nutrient timing is based on the idea that nutrients are handled differently during various periods of the day (which does not necessarily mean “clock time”, but usually an association with activity, such as a training session). Most people’s bodies use dietary carbohydrates more effectively during this period than at any other time of the day. The principles of nutrient timing can be used to organize carbohydrate intake for your body type and carbohydrate tolerance. You may try taking some of your “smart carbs” from other meals and moving them to your post-workout meal (especially if your workouts are long duration / very high-intensity). This will ensure that the carbs you consume are efficiently used as energy for your workouts, as well as used to replenish your energy stores immediately after exercise. This significantly reduces the likelihood of them being stored as

fat. This is totally optional. Consuming carbohydrates evenly throughout the day will likely be fine. You can experiment and see what works best for you. See the chart below for an example of how to utilize nutrient timing.

So if your regular Daily Meal Plan looks like this:

		LEAN PROTEIN	VEGGIES	SMART CARBS	HEALTHY FATS
MEAL 1	Morning	1 palm	1 fist	1 cupped handful	1 thumb
MEAL 2	Midday	1 palm	1 fist	1 cupped handful	1 thumb
MEAL 3	Afternoon	1 palm	1 fist	1 cupped handful	1 thumb
MEAL 4	Evening	1 palm	1 fist	1 cupped handful	1 thumb

If, for example, you do a long duration / very high-intensity workout between Meal 1 and Meal 2, following the principles of nutrient timing would mean taking one cupped handful of smart carbs from Meal 3 and moving it to Meal 2 (or the meal following your workout) and it would look like this:

		LEAN PROTEIN	VEGGIES	SMART CARBS	HEALTHY FATS
MEAL 1	Morning	1 palm	1 fist	1 cupped handful	1 thumb
WORKOUT	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
MEAL 2	Midday	1 palm	1 fist	2 cupped handfuls	1 thumb
MEAL 3	Afternoon	1 palm	1 fist	0 cupped handfuls	1 thumb
MEAL 4	Evening	1 palm	1 fist	1 cupped handful	1 thumb

Weekly Meal Prep and Cooking Techniques

- Use a slow cooker or an InstantPot
- Chop and store veggies in bulk
- Roast or grill meats and veggies
- Steam veggies
- Make a shake (Throwing in some raw spinach is a great way to get your veggies in with breakfast if you can't really stomach them first thing in the morning)
- Prepare a basic salad
- Portion out your meals into containers ahead of time so that you can just grab them and go!

Dining Out

- Get a main dish that is not a starch-based food. Try to choose the leanest meat or seafood available, cooked in a simple manner—by baking, broiling, sautéing, roasting, poaching, or steaming—without added starches and fats.
- Instead of a pasta dish, order a variety of vegetables served over a mound of spinach (sautéed in oil, not butter!) Have a small serving of fresh fruit for dessert.
- Ask the server to NOT bring the bread basket!
- Keep the meal as simple as you can; the fewer ingredients, the better. Don't be afraid to special order something that is not on the menu. Restaurants nowadays are typically pretty accommodating. If all else fails, mention that you have food allergies (which may actually be accurate!)
- Ask for dressings and sauces on the side (and use them sparingly, if at all).
- Check out the restaurant's menu on their website (or contact them directly) and know what your options are before you arrive.

Traveling

- Dining out (see above)
- Buy food and take it with you in a cooler (see above)
- Buy food in supermarkets, grocery stores, and even roadside markets along the way (Fresh fruit and veggies are always available!)