

# Getting Started with Nutrition



Immediate Steps to Start Your Health Journey

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# Introduction

You're ready. No more putting off your health journey. It starts now! I put together this guide so that you have a solid foundation to start. It can be a daunting task, but you got this. This is a very brief overview intended to get you started. If you want a deeper dive, I suggest you sign up for a [nutrition consult](#) to get personalized recommendations based on your unique situation. The items and topics covered in this guide are meant to be gradual introductions. Don't go 0 – 100 miles per hour. That's a good way to fail. Pick a topic that you feel comfortable starting with, and slowly begin to add in the others. Brick by brick. One step at a time. Each day offers a new opportunity. Meaningful change is done with consistency. If you have a misstep or bad day, reset, and move on. Again, you've got this!

So, let's get started...

# Circadian Rhythms

Honestly, I wasn't entirely sure where to put this. But I opted for right up front because this is something that if we can get it right, we set everything up for success. There is not a cell in our body that does not have a circadian rhythm, and the things presented here are just the beginning of optimizing your circadian rhythm.

So, what do you do? You may think of circadian rhythms as they apply to sleep, and that is true. But the truth is that good sleep starts in the morning! Once you wake up, once the sun is out, open your windows or get outside to get exposed to the natural light. The spectrums of light in the morning help align your internal clock with what time it is. If you've been up for more than 90 minutes, you could have some coffee as you watch the sunrise. Otherwise, opt for water with some sea salt and lemon/lime juice. This is going to rehydrate you and start to fire up your mitochondria. Once 90 minutes to 2 hours has passed, then go for your coffee. This helps ensure that your cortisol circadian rhythm does not get disrupted by that jolt of caffeine when you first wake up.

Once you're awake and rocking and rolling, if you're having breakfast (we'll get into what that might look like later), eat your breakfast and get on with your day. Throughout your day, try to intersperse periods outside in the sun wherever you can. Once sunset comes around, try to make sure you do the same thing you did in the morning. Again, this is aligning your internal clock with where it is in the day. Sunset

viewing also protects your circadian rhythms from potential blue light disruption later in the night.

Speaking of blue light, in general, it's good to avoid throughout the day. I highly encourage you to turn on a color filter (on iPhone go to settings > accessibility > display text & size > color filters and then turn them on and slide the hue to the left for red and crank the intensity all the way up). This won't completely eliminate blue light being emitted, but it will absolutely help. You can also get some blue light lenses, a filter for your TV, or even a program for your computer that aligns how much blue light is shown with the time of day. But especially at night, we want to avoid electronics and blue light *at least* 90 minutes before bedtime. Even just 30 minutes can delay melatonin production for a couple hours. At the same time, ensure you're avoiding bright lights well. You may even want to make a swap for red lights specifically for nighttime. If you aren't ready for that, candlelight and then incandescent bulbs are the next best things.

Then of course, you want to go to sleep. The goal is about 8 hours of sleep each night. To maximize the time spent sleeping, start to practice proper sleep hygiene. Sleep in a pitch-black room, you should not even be able to see your hand in front of your face. Keep the temperature cool around 65-67 degrees Fahrenheit. Eliminate screen time about 90-120 minutes before bedtime. Wind down, try writing in a journal or deep breathing prior to bed to increase parasympathetic tone. Avoid caffeine in the afternoon. Exercise, but avoid exercise 2 hours before bed. Go to bed before 11pm.

# What Should I Eat?

You may have heard that to lose weight you simply need to eat less and exercise more. This is an extremely reductive approach to a complicated problem set. The bottom line is that the types of foods you eat are going to impact your body in a powerful way. This section comes first because while weight loss is largely a Calories in versus Calories out problem, different Calories affect you in different ways. If you start focusing on higher quality foods, you may find you start making progress without even trying.

## What to Eat

- Organic Vegetables and Fruits – try to get 3 servings of veggies for every serving of fruit
- Gluten Free Grains – things like quinoa, wild rice, brown rice pastas, buckwheat, teff, millet, amaranth, gluten free oats
- Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs – free range, pastured, wild caught, and wild game. We want these sources as close to their natural environment as possible
- Beans and Legumes – as tolerated

- Dairy – to start, avoid dairy products. Goat's products may be better tolerated. Opt for plain and unsweetened almond, coconut, cashew milks yogurts and cheeses.
- Healthy fats – raw, organic nuts and nut butters (the only ingredient in nut butters should be the nut), avocado, avocado oil, extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil
- Caffeine – in moderation and not after about 1pm
- Vinegars and Condiments – apple cider, white wine, red wine, balsamic vinegars. Condiments such as mustard, sugar free ketchup (watch for sugar substitutes as well) are okay.
- Herbs and Spices – all fair game
- Sweeteners – honey and maple syrup, but not a ton! Raw 70% or higher dark chocolate. Again, not a ton

### **What to Avoid**

- Alcohol – You're an adult and can make your own decisions, but when we boil it down, alcohol is a poison. If you choose to drink, go for higher quality wine and spirits
- Gluten and Refined Grains – white flours, pastas, and breads, wheat, barley, and rye
- Dairy – this one is tricky. I suggest starting out avoiding dairy. Then a few months in, try re-introducing grass-fed dairy products and cheeses aged over 6 months.
- Processed and Packaged Foods: Chips, pastas, frozen dinners, white breads, energy bars, and most things with a food label that come from packages



- Factory-farmed and Processed Meats – if your meat isn't labeled as one of things above, kick it to the curb. Definitely don't go for plant-based meat products!
- Soda and other Sweetened Beverages – fruit juices, sugar in your coffee, and basically anything that isn't water, green tea, a quality kombucha, or black coffee
- Sweeteners – processed sugars, any syrup (going to have to check the labels), corn syrup, all artificial sweeteners
- Candies and Sweets – these are a no-go
- Fats and Oils – processed and refined oils such as vegetable oil, canola oil, rapeseed oil, corn oil, margarine, etc.

### **Why?**

I'll spare you some of the more boring details. To keep things simple, the things on the avoid list are going to raise inflammation, impede your ability to properly digest food, cause digestive distress, and just impede your progress overall. What we find is that the foods that are as close to their natural form as possible are going to be the best for us. When in doubt, nature gets it right. The breakdown of macro and micro nutrients found in nature are just what our bodies need.

Do you really need to go organic? Short answer: Yes. It reduces your potential exposure to pesticides such as glyphosate, is better for the environment (especially if you opt for regenerative products), and is better for you. Go local and seasonal when possible. When opting local, understand that many small farmers can't afford the organic certification, but still may use safe practices. Most will simply tell you if you ask. If they aren't willing to, that may be a sign to find another farm to support.

# How Much Should I Eat?

This is a simple question, but it doesn't have a simple answer. The fact is how much we need to eat varies based on age, height, biological sex, activity levels, genetics, and a whole litany of factors. However, what I can give you is a place to start and an easy way to measure your portions.

I love hand portions because our hands are always with us, and a quick eyeball gives a pretty good estimate of how much we're eating. The guide on the next page offers a breakdown of hand portions and how to use them. What if you're eating something with a mixture such as a soup or casserole? Do your best to estimate. If you choose to eat packaged foods, you can use the label to find a rough idea of how many portions that item has.

To start, simply take an inventory of how much you're eating right now. Then start to reduce your intake 1-2 serving of carbohydrates or fats at a time. It's important to keep protein intake higher because protein is essential for so many things in our bodies. Shoot for 1g/lb of your ideal body weight in protein. Protein does more than just improve muscle mass. Amino acids, what protein gets broken down into when we eat them, repair muscles and connective tissue after a tough workout, synthesize neurotransmitters, enzymes, and immune system. So, it's critical we are getting enough protein daily.

Next, you'll want to center your carbohydrate intake around your exercise. If you have a heavy strength training session, you're going to need more carbohydrates. If you know you'll be doing less activity, you should try to eat less carbohydrates. I'd qualify low carbohydrate days are <150g from the guide below. It's important to note that this does not include vegetables. Go ahead and eat those suckers all day long! Shoot for 6-8 fists of veggies each day.

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# PORTION CONTROL GUIDE

## FORGET CALORIE COUNTING. TRY THIS METHOD INSTEAD.


Most people think controlling portions means counting calories, but we think there's a better way. Try our (much easier) Hand Measure system instead.

### YOUR HAND IS ALL YOU NEED


Your hand is proportionate to your body, its size never changes, and it's always with you, making it the perfect tool for measuring food and nutrients - minimal counting required.




A serving of protein =  
**1 PALM**



A serving of vegetables =  
**1 FIST**










A serving of carbs =  
**1 CUPPED HAND**



A serving of fats =  
**1 THUMB**

### HERE'S HOW TO USE THIS METHOD TO BUILD A PLATE

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
<b>PROTEIN</b> Meat, fish, eggs, cottage cheese, and Greek yogurt	<b>VEGETABLES</b> Broccoli, spinach, salad, carrots, etc.	<b>CARBOHYDRATES</b> Grains, starches, beans, and fruits	<b>FATS</b> Oils, butters, nut butters, nuts, and seeds
 <b>Women:</b> One palm-sized portion (~ 20-30 g protein)	 <b>Women:</b> One fist-sized portion	 <b>Women:</b> One cupped-hand sized portion (~ 20-30 g carbs)	 <b>Women:</b> One thumb-sized portion (~ 7-12 g fat)
 <b>Men:</b> Two palm-sized portions (~ 40-60 g protein)	 <b>Men:</b> Two fist-sized portions	 <b>Men:</b> Two cupped-hand sized portions (~ 40-60 g carbs)	 <b>Men:</b> Two thumb-sized portions (~ 15-25 g fat)

**Men** eating 3-4 meals as outlined would get around 2,300 - 3,000 calories each day.  
**Women** eating 3-4 meals as outlined would get around 1,200 - 1,500 calories each day.

### NOW, CUSTOMIZE THE PLAN FOR YOU

Active **men** do best with 6-8 servings of each food group per day (~2,300-3,000 kcal).  
 Active **women** do best with 4-6 servings of each food group per day (~1,500 - 2,100 kcal).  
 From there, adjust the number of portions to meet your personal needs and goals.

**IF YOU NEED MORE FOOD BECAUSE YOU...**

- Are larger in stature
- Aren't getting muscle-gain results
- Eat less frequently throughout the day
- Are very active
- Are trying to gain muscle
- Aren't feeling satisfied at meals

**...THEN START BY ADDING...**

Men: 1 cupped handful of carbs and/or 1 thumb of fat to a few meals each day.  
 Women: 1/2 cupped handful of carbs and/or 1/2 thumb of fat to a few meals each day.

**IF YOU NEED LESS FOOD BECAUSE YOU...**


- Are smaller in stature
- Aren't getting weight-loss results
- Eat more frequently throughout the day
- Are not very active
- Are trying to lose weight
- Are feeling too full at meals

**...THEN START BY REMOVING...**

Men: 1 cupped handful of carbs and/or 1 thumb of fat from a few meals each day.  
 Women: 1/2 cupped handful of carbs and/or 1/2 thumb of fat from a few meals each day.

This system is easier than counting calories and nearly as accurate. Just like with counting, though, pay attention to results and adjust as needed.

For the full article explaining this infographic:  
<https://www.precisionnutrition.com/calorie-control-guide>

 Precision Nutrition

# When Should I Eat?

Fasting, time restricted eating, eat before bed, eat every 2 hours. These are some common things I hear from clients when it comes to when you should eat. Here's the deal, your stomach needs at least 12 hours to rest each day. Now, does that mean time restricted eating or fasting is the way to go? Maybe. If you shut the kitchen down at 7 (something I recommend), and you wake up between 6-7, you're already near or at that 12-hour mark. From there, it really boils down to your goals and preferences. Aside from giving the stomach rest, it also aids in aligning the circadian rhythm of the digestive track because no sunlight gets in there, but the food we eat does have traces of light that help our guts know that there's light present and it should be active.

Fasting is a great tool to be in a Caloric deficit, and it has some other health benefits you may be familiar with as well. But, if you break your fast with garbage breakfast foods (the foods we normally think of like cereals, waffles, muffins, etc.) you're going to set yourself to over-eat and crash later. Whenever you break your fast, if it is after that 12-hour window, do so with protein, fat, and fiber. This will be more satiating and provide more steady energy throughout your day. This could be an omelet with veggies and some avocado, a salad with steak and olive oil, or just some meat and nuts.

I highly recommend not skipping breakfast on days you will be strength training. You'll want to make sure that you have enough fuel to make it through your training session. Fasting prior to may lead to decreased performance and other adverse effects. If you choose to fast, do it on your low carb, non-training days.

Speaking of skipping breakfast, it's better to skip dinner from a fasting perspective. However, you may not want to do that. If not, make breakfast and lunch your larger meals, and make dinner a bit smaller. You may be wondering why that is my recommendation. It has to do with circadian rhythms, and it's along the same lines with why I suggest shutting the kitchen down after 7pm (only consuming water until those 12 hours are up).

Consuming large meals at dinner and eating late at night means your body must focus on digesting food. If it's focused on digesting food, it's not getting prepared to sleep. The traces of light in our food are sending the signal to our guts that it is light out and it needs to be active. So, you're likely going to have disrupted sleep and delayed melatonin production. If you're fatigued and tired all the time, maybe try having an earlier, smaller dinner.

It's also important to limit snacking. Mindless snacking specifically is a straight shot to over consuming. Also, we need to remember that our digestive systems need rest. This applies to throughout the day as well. You may have heard that you need to eat every few hours to keep blood sugar levels stable. While this is true, if eating 3 stable meals a day is causing wild blood sugar waves, you may need to look the types of foods you're eating. While snacking may provide stable blood sugar levels, what are you keeping them stable at? If you're hungry between meals, eat more at those meals. Prioritize protein, fats, and fiber. This will help you feel full for longer. If you're having a hard time eating enough for your goals (this is largely only true in goals of weight gain vs weight loss), you may want to add a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> meal. But the idea that you need to

snack between meals is just not true. Eat enough at your meals, eat the right kinds of foods, and you'll feel much better overall!

Another thing you may be wondering is if you need a protein shake after lifting weights. Honestly, not really. If you are eating enough protein throughout the day, you should be good to go but drinking some protein post-workout is a good way to make sure you're getting close to your protein goal each day without really having to think about it.

# What Should I Drink?

Honestly, this one is going to be pretty easy – water, black coffee, green tea, and maybe probiotic drinks like kombucha. Most other options are sugar-filled drinks which simply make us less metabolically efficient and provide empty calories. This includes sports drinks! Unless you're exercising for more than 2 hours, you probably don't need a sports drink, and if you're exercising for more than 2 hours (other than training for a specific event), you aren't maximizing your training which I'll talk about in the next chapter. I will add one caveat in that adding heavy cream (from grass-fed cows) is a good move if you aren't a fan of black coffee. Although it could be argued that if you need to add sweeteners and other items to your coffee, do you really like it?

Water is the only liquid we need to be drinking. Also, our water is dirty and filled with stuff we don't need. At the very least, you need some sort of filter. A reverse osmosis filter is the gold standard. If you go this route, ensure it either re-adds minerals or you're adding your own minerals. Because we do still need those in our water. A Berkey filter is another great water filter option. At the very least, the standard filter your refrigerator water filter may have built in is better than nothing if you aren't ready for these pricier filter options.

But why is water so important? Well, here are some numbers to consider: bone is about 22% water, adipose (fat) tissue is about 25% water, muscle and brain tissue are about 75% water, blood is about 83% water, and eyes are about 95% water. Two-thirds



of our bodies are made up of water. Water plays a critical role in our hydration, detoxification, and electrolyte balance. It lubricates, regulates our temperature, and transports nutrients to and from our cells. Physical performance begins to decline with just 2% lost water weight, and cognitive performance begins to decline with 5%. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  your bodyweight in ounces is a good goal for daily water intake.

I will say, if you're someone who is drinking solely, or a large quantity of sugar-sweetened sodas and other drinks, it's probably a good idea to swap to diet and sugar free options. Then start to titrate down. And nobody is perfect, you're going to have other drinks from time to time. The whole point is to get to where those become occasional indulgences versus our only source of liquid.

# What About Exercise?

Exercise is a key part of a healthy lifestyle. But simply exercising more isn't the answer. In fact, you can exercise too much. Add that in with potentially not eating enough, and you're likely to not see any progress and you're at a higher risk for illness or injury.

That sounds like something that's not ideal for anyone. Especially not you, someone trying to improve your life. So, what can you do? For starters, long walks daily. It's not truly cardio, but the research has shown that more daily steps lead to improved health and less risk for issues down the line. Plus, there are tons of emotional and psychological benefits to getting outside and walking each day.

Okay, great, but I'm sure now you want to get to the good stuff. Strength training is essential from a health standpoint. If you want to maintain your independence as you age, being strong is critical. But you don't need to strength train every day to reap the benefits. In fact, less is more!

Here's how I lay out my strength program for myself and for my clients:

## Suggested Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>Day 3</b>

With this layout, you get 3 total body workouts a week, and you get optimal time to recover between exercise sessions. Those rest days, and the weekend depending on your plans, would be excellent lower carb or longer fast days. Plus, if you're getting your long walks in every day, you're enhancing your body's ability to recover and get ready for each of those workouts. A typical workout could like this:

<b>Session Snapshot</b>
Warmup
Mobility/Movement Prep
A1) Primary Movement
A2)
B1)
B2)
Cool Down
Breathwork

Because we are doing total body workouts, and want to maximize our time, we're going to use antagonist pair supersets. A superset just mean you do A1 and then A2 until you complete all the sets and reps. You'll then move on to B1 and B2. Antagonist pairs simply means you'll do the opposite part of the body in the opposite movement pattern. So, if A1 is a goblet squat (lower body push), A2 is going to be a lat pull down (upper body pull). Then, B1 would be a RDL (lower body pull) with B2 a pushup (upper body push). This allows us to get more work done in the same amount of time if we did straight sets of each of those 4 exercises.

You could also make those rest days, more cardio focused days (Note: those days would not be a good place for HIIT). Those could look like circuits, more brisk walks or bike rides, or any activity that gets your heart rate up to about 60-70% of your max heart rate.

As you plan your training, it is recommended between alternating between higher volume and higher weights. I use 4-week training blocks like this:

### Training Block Snapshot

	Week 1 70%	Week 2 80%	Week 3 90%	Week 4 100%
<b>Day 1 Total Body</b>				
Warmup				
Training				
Cool Down				
<b>Day 2 Total Body</b>				
Warmup				
Training				
Cool Down				
<b>Day 3 Total Body</b>				
Warmup				
Training				
Cool Down				

Progressive Overload:  
Same 3 Workouts for 4 weeks  
and go up in weight each week

In week 1, you pick weights that are relatively easy, then each week try to go up in difficulty with week 4 being your most challenging. Then, you switch to the opposite of what you were doing. As you switch between blocks, try not to increase the total intensity (weight used) by more than about 15%. So, if I'm doing a block with lighter weights for 3 sets of 12 reps for a single training block, I may move to a block with heavier weights of 4 sets of 6 reps. This approach allows you to continue to make progress almost indefinitely if you continue to train and stay injury free.

If all that seems a little daunting and time consuming, it may be worth signing up for a coaching plan. This way, all you need to do is go put in the work. All the back-end planning is done for you! My clients love that they don't have to think about what they are doing each day. Instead, they simply log into an app and get to work.

# Closing Thoughts

Alright, you're ready. You've learned all there is to know about health and nutrition. Okay, maybe not. However, you do have all the foundational information to get started. Of course, there are tons of more ideas and topics I could have included: Supplements, environmental toxins, relationships, blood tests, and so on. But to dive into all of that would have defeated the purpose of this entire endeavor – I wanted to provide you with some free information to get you started on your health journey. Obviously, I couldn't include everything.

Where should you start? At the beginning. Start to implement each of the ideas presented here one by one until you're confident in your ability to do so. If you get through all of this and hit a plateau or make no progress at all, reach out for a free discovery call. I can provide some guidance there and lay out exactly how I work with people to improve all these areas, and how I utilize as much objective information as possible to help guide decision making.