

# NUTRITION

MANNY'S FITNESS

"GET FIT IN THE  
GYM; LOSE WEIGHT  
IN THE KITCHEN!"

Healthy eating habits  
are critical to your  
health and wellness  
goals.

This guide provides  
a foundation to help  
you achieve your  
goals!



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# INTRODUCTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Welcome to the first step of your journey towards understanding the fundamental role that nutrition plays in achieving your fitness goals. Whether you're looking to lose weight, gain muscle, enhance your endurance, or simply improve your overall health, the foods you consume are key to your success.

Nutrition and fitness are interdependent. A well-planned diet provides the energy and nutrients required to perform at your best during workouts, aids in recovery and muscle repair, and helps you achieve your body composition goals. Think of your body as a high-performance vehicle; the quality of fuel you put in directly affects how well it runs.



Diet and nutrition myths are plentiful so it is important to see through the marketing and focus on the fundamentals - you need to balance across all macronutrients while getting sufficient dietary variety to also attain healthy micronutrient intake!

### **Understanding Macronutrients**

Macronutrients are the nutrients your body needs in large amounts, each playing a unique role in maintaining health and supporting physical activity.

#### **Carbohydrates**

Carbohydrates are your body's primary energy source. They're broken down into glucose, which fuels your workouts and supports brain function. Complex carbohydrates, found in foods like whole grains, vegetables, and legumes, are preferred for sustained energy release.

#### **Proteins**

Proteins are essential for growth, repair, and maintenance of all body tissues, including muscle. Consuming adequate protein is crucial for muscle recovery and growth, especially after exercise. Sources include meat, fish, dairy, legumes, and nuts.

#### **Fats**

Fats are a dense energy source and are necessary for absorbing vitamins A, D, E, and K. They also play a crucial role in hormone production, which influences muscle growth and mood. Healthy fats can be found in avocados, nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fatty fish.

### **The Importance of Micronutrients**

Micronutrients, consisting of vitamins and minerals, are required in smaller amounts but are vital for energy production, immune function, bone health, and more. A diverse diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats will typically provide all the micronutrients your body needs.

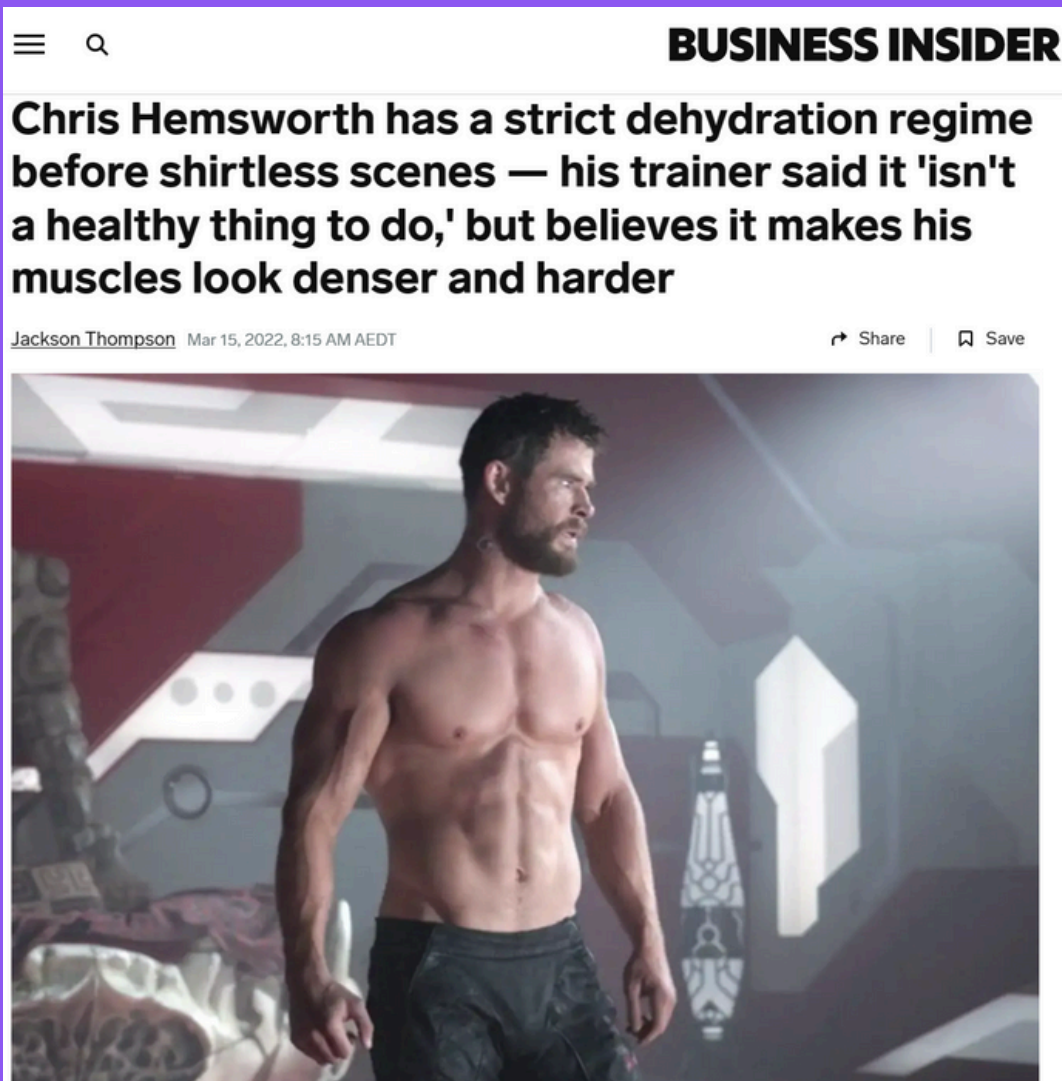
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*It is health that is  
real wealth and  
not pieces of gold  
and silver.*

Gandhi



# SOCIAL MEDIA & BODY IMAGE



“

*Too much of what we see online and in the media is fake, unhealthy or manipulated.*



In today's digital age, where social media and movies often showcase idealised and sometimes digitally altered images, forming a healthy body image can be challenging.

## Understanding Body Image

Body image is how you see yourself when you look in the mirror or when you picture yourself in your mind. This includes what you believe about your appearance, how you feel about your body, and how you sense and control your body as you move. A healthy body image is recognising your individual qualities and strengths, appreciating what your body can do, and feeling comfortable and confident in your skin.

## The Impact of Social Media and Movies

Social media and movies often present images that can set unrealistic standards for beauty and fitness. These standards are not only unattainable for most people but can also be harmful to mental health and self-esteem. It's crucial to understand that many of these images are carefully curated, edited, or chosen to depict perfection, not reality.

## Strategies for Cultivating a Positive Body Image

Focus on Functionality Over Appearance

- Recognise and celebrate what your body can do rather than how it looks. Whether it's completing a challenging workout, or recovering from an injury, your body's capabilities are remarkable.

Practice Self-Compassion

- Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, just as you would treat a friend. Avoid harsh self-criticism and practice self-compassion to build a more positive relationship with your body.

Set Realistic Goals

- Set achievable, health-focused goals rather than appearance-based ones. Emphasise improvements in strength, endurance, or well-being rather than weight loss or achieving a particular physique.

Curate Your Media Consumption

- Be selective about the social media accounts and media content you engage with. Follow accounts that promote body positivity, health at every size, and realistic portrayals of fitness and beauty.

Seek Support

- Surround yourself with a supportive community that values health and well-being over appearance. This could include friends, family, or groups committed to body positivity and health-focused fitness.

Educate Yourself

- Learn about the ways media images are altered and the diversity of body types and shapes. Understanding the behind-the-scenes of these portrayals can help demystify and debunk the perfection often presented.



## Avoiding Unrealistic Expectations

- Recognise the diversity of healthy bodies: Health and fitness come in all sizes and shapes. Embrace your unique body and understand that achieving the physique of someone you see online or in movies is not a prerequisite for health or happiness.
- Understand the role of genetics: Genetics play a significant role in body shape and size, muscle composition, and how you respond to exercise. Focus on your personal progress and health markers rather than comparing yourself to others.
- Focus on holistic health: A healthy body image and lifestyle encompass physical, mental, and emotional health. Prioritise activities and choices that make you feel good from the inside out.

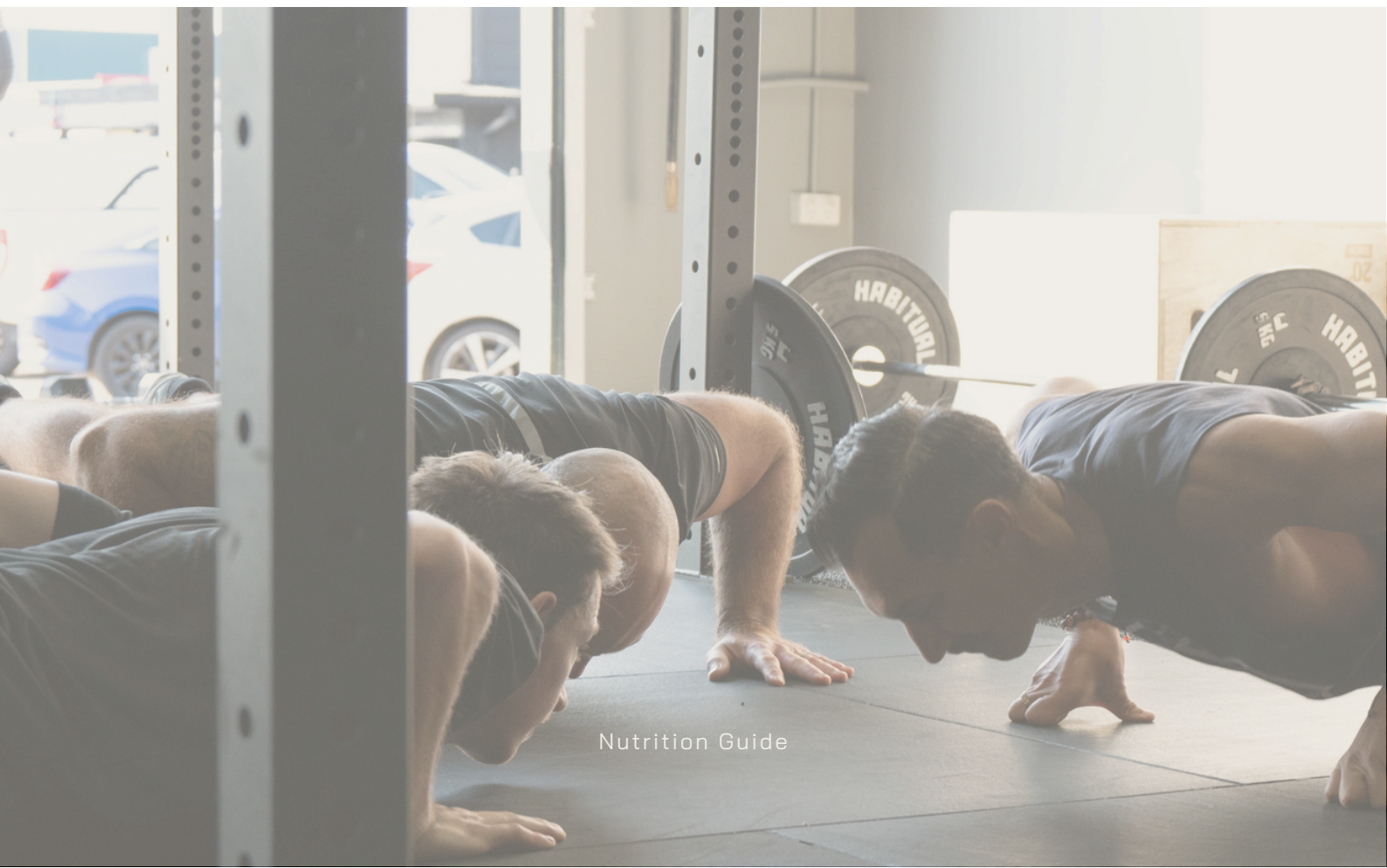




# NUTRITIONAL GOALS FOR DIFFERENT FITNESS OBJECTIVES

A wide-angle photograph of the exterior of a gym named 'MANNY'S FITNESS'. The building has a modern design with large glass windows and a corrugated metal awning over the entrance. Inside the gym, several people are visible: a woman is performing a squat with a barbell, another woman is in a lunge position, and a man is in a plank position. A small sign on the sidewalk reads '7 DAY FREE TRIAL'.

Achieving your fitness goals is much easier with a diet tailored to your specific needs. Whether you aim to lose weight, gain muscle, improve your endurance, or recover from workouts more efficiently, understanding how to adjust your nutrition can make all the difference.



Nutrition Guide

## Nutrition for Weight Loss

The foundation of weight loss is creating a calorie deficit, where you consume fewer calories than you burn. Fighting hunger while maintaining a calorie deficit can be difficult, therefore the quality of calories is crucial for healthy weight loss.

- **Focus on Whole Foods:** Prioritise fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats.
- **Control Portions:** Use measuring tools or visual cues to keep portions in check.
- **Increase Protein Intake:** High protein foods can enhance satiety, helping you feel full longer.
- **Monitor Carb Intake:** Opt for complex carbs with fibre to keep you satisfied longer and support steady energy levels.
- **Substitute Healthy Alternatives:** denying yourself treats or cravings can lead to diet fatigue and giving up before you've achieved your goals. I have a sweet tooth and love chocolate - in my diet I substitute milk chocolate for dark chocolate. As dark chocolate is richer, I am satisfied with smaller portions.

## Nutrition for Muscle Gain

Gaining muscle requires a calorie surplus, consuming more calories than you burn, alongside strength training.

- **Increase Calorie Intake Gradually:** Aim for a slight calorie surplus to fuel muscle growth without significant fat gain.


- **Prioritise Protein:** Ensure your diet includes ample high-quality protein to support muscle repair and growth.
- **Incorporate Carbs and Fats:** Carbohydrates fuel your workouts, while fats are vital for hormone production, including those involved in muscle growth.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Adequate water intake supports optimal metabolic function and nutrient transport.

## Nutrition for Endurance Training

Endurance athletes require a diet that supports long-lasting energy and recovery.

- **High-Carb Diet:** Carbohydrates are essential for replenishing glycogen stores used during endurance activities.
- **Moderate Protein:** Adequate protein supports recovery and repair but doesn't need to be as high as in muscle-building diets.
- **Healthy Fats:** Incorporate omega-3 and monounsaturated fats for their anti-inflammatory benefits and energy.
- **Hydration and Electrolytes:** Long-duration activities necessitate careful hydration, with an emphasis on replacing electrolytes lost through sweat.





# UNDERSTANDING YOUR BODY'S NEEDS

Embarking on a fitness journey requires more than just following general dietary advice. It involves understanding your body's unique nutritional needs, which can significantly impact your ability to reach your fitness goals efficiently.

## **Calculating Caloric Needs**

Your daily caloric needs are determined by your basal metabolic rate, the calories you expend through physical activity and the thermic effect of food.

There are a number of good calorie calculators available online to determine your caloric needs. Or alternatively you can use the Manny's Fitness calculator available from our website.

Calorie calculators are useful for providing general advice,

however a number of factors impact your specific maintenance calories and you may need to adjust this based on your own experiences.

Your target daily calorie intake will vary depending on your goals. If you are looking to build muscle (aka bulking), your daily calorie intake should be slightly higher than your maintenance requirement. If your goal is to lose weight your daily calorie intake needs to be below maintenance.

When trying to lose weight remember to set sensible targets. You didn't put the weight on in 1 day - you can't lose it in 1 day either! To lose 1kg, you need a calorie deficit of around 7,700 calories. Trying to lose weight too quickly is both unsafe and also unsustainable. A reasonable guide is to target losing half a kilo each week.

## Adjusting Macronutrient Ratios

We recommend starting by determining your protein requirement as a first step. Protein is the essential building block of muscle and too many people don't eat sufficient protein on a daily basis. This is not helped by WHO guidance that continues to recommend lower than optimal protein levels seen in recent scientific studies, particularly for someone who works out regularly.

Once you know your target protein intake, allocate your remaining calories between carbs and fat depending on your training needs. TIP: 1 gram of protein is around 4 calories.

- **Weight Loss:** Higher protein and moderate carbs can help preserve muscle mass while dieting. Target 1.8 to 2.7 grams of protein per kilo of body weight. Allocate remaining calories on a roughly 60:40 ratio between carbs and fats.
- **Muscle Gain:** Aim for a balance that supports energy and muscle synthesis. Target 1.6 to 2.2 grams of protein per kilo of body weight. Allocate remaining calories with higher carb intake such as a 70:30 carb to fat ratio.
- **Endurance Training:** Endurance athletes may require more carbohydrates for fuel. Target 1.5 to 2.0 grams of protein per kilo of weight and a 80:20 carbs to fat ratio for the remaining calories.

For example, a 75kg male aiming to build muscle, performing at least 4 hard workouts per week of 60 minutes, would have a maintenance calorie requirement of around 2,600 per day.

His target protein intake would be around 150 grams per day which equates to 600 calories.

Eating slightly above maintenance, say 2,800 calories per day, means there is 2,200 calories per day to be allocated between carbs and fats. Using our 70:30 ratio as a guide, that equates to around 1,500 calories per day from carbs and 700 calories per day from fat.

## The Impact of Metabolism on Diet Planning

Your metabolism—how your body converts food into energy—varies based on genetics, age, sex, and muscle mass. Understanding whether you have a fast or slow metabolism can help in tailoring your diet. Those with a fast metabolism might need more calories to gain weight, while individuals with a slower metabolism may require fewer calories to lose weight.

If you are tracking calorie consumption accurately, you can use your weight loss or gain over time to help fine tune your calculated maintenance calories. For example, if you calculated you should lose half a kilo per week, but are actually losing a kilo per week (average over time) then your maintenance calories are actually higher than you initially calculated.





# DIET PLANNING AND MEAL PREPARATION

Equipping yourself with the skills to plan and prepare your meals is a game-changer in your fitness and health journey. Not only does it help you stay on track with your nutritional goals, but it also ensures that you're fueling your body with the right type of energy for your workouts and recovery (i.e. balancing your macronutrient intake according to your goals). This chapter delves into creating a balanced meal plan, strategies for meal preparation, and tips for healthy cooking.

## **Plan, Plan, Plan!**

We have all been there before - despite good intent and a lot of effort to stick to our diet, we aren't losing weight.

Ultimately weight loss is a simple equation. If calories consumed is less than calories burned, then we will lose weight. So if the diet isn't working then the simple truth is our calories consumed are too high.

Similarly if we are trying to build muscle and are finding our gains are plateauing, then it could be that we aren't consuming enough calories (this one is a little harder to pinpoint as it could be a number of issues!)

Regardless of what goal we are setting, the fastest way for our diet to go off track is by not developing and tracking your diet plan!

That means mapping out an appropriate meal plan for the week that balances macronutrient intake each day, manages hunger (particularly when aiming to lose weight), and ensuring the diet remains sustainable.

Don't underestimate the importance of building into your meal plan considerations around what will help you stick to it! For instance if you have a sweet tooth, how will you quench this craving without blowing out your calorie intake? (TIP: a square of Lindt ultra dark chocolate works wonders for me!)

Also consider the timing of your meals and snacks. The inability to stave off hunger cravings are a common cause of diets going astray. Planning smaller, more frequent meals and snacks is a great way to avoid hunger cravings. (TIP: when you feel hungry outside of planned meal times, have a glass of water and force yourself to wait 15 minutes. If you're still hungry, it might be appropriate to add in an additional snack or bring your next meal forward - but be wary as boredom is often confused with hunger!)

Include high fibre and highly satiating foods in your meals.

For instance, start your main meal with a garden salad dressed with a teaspoon of balsamic vinegar. By starting the meal with a high fibre option you increase the feeling of 'fullness' as the meal progresses and it also benefits digestion.

Potatoes are a great addition to provide a highly satiating food that is relatively low in calories - just don't fry them or add a load of butter!

When choosing eggs as a high protein option, replace one of the eggs with a cup of egg whites. This will give you a higher volume of food, with lower calories and higher protein content.

Remember that variety will be a key to a good meal plan. Not only does it avoid 'food fatigue' it will also ensure you obtain the right micronutrients from your diet as well.

And finally, think about your busy life and how you can still eat healthy when you are on the go or home late from work and tired. If you're not realistic in setting your plan and your goals, you will find yourself spinning off track and losing motivation.

## **Meal Prep Strategies for Busy Lifestyles**

### **Batch Cooking**

One of the most efficient meal prep methods is to cook large quantities of food at once and then divide it into portions for the week. This can be done with staple items like grains, proteins, and vegetables.

### **Utilise Freezer Meals**

Prepare meals that freeze well in advance. Soups, stews, and casseroles are great options for freezing and can be a lifesaver on busy days.

### **Plan for Snacks**

Healthy snacking can play a crucial role in meeting your daily nutritional needs. Prepare portion-controlled snacks like chopped vegetables, nuts, or yogurt to avoid reaching for less healthy options.

### **Flavour Bomb Sauces**

Meal Prep isn't just about making meals ahead of time, its about making meals faster when you are short on time. Often the longest part of cooking is developing flavour.

Using a high flavour sauces, can be a great way to pull together a plate of otherwise simple foods into a delicious and balanced meal.



## **Healthy Cooking Techniques and Tips**

### **Choose Healthier Cooking Methods**

Opt for baking, steaming, grilling, or sautéing rather than frying. These methods reduce the need for added fats and preserve the nutrients in your foods.

### **Flavour with Herbs and Spices**

Instead of relying on salt or sugar for flavour, experiment with a variety of herbs and spices. They add minimal calories and can offer health benefits of their own.

### **Make Smart Substitutions**

Adapt recipes to fit your nutritional goals by making simple substitutions, such as using whole grain instead of refined grains, or Greek yogurt in place of sour cream.

## **Reading and Understanding Food Labels**

Food labels provide valuable information about the nutritional content of packaged foods. Pay attention to serving sizes, calories, and the amount of sugar, sodium, and saturated fat a product contains. Look for items with short ingredient lists, indicating minimal processing.

## **Macro-tracking Apps**

There are a number of apps readily available that can help you determine and track your macros and even provide meal advice and plans. These vary in price and quality, so make sure you do your research before you buy.





# SUPPLEMENTATION IN FITNESS

**Supplements targeted at the fitness community is a multi billion dollar industry. It is often unregulated and therefore becomes susceptible to exaggerated benefit claims and quality issues. While supplements can play a supportive role in achieving your fitness goals and addressing nutritional gaps, supplements are often expensive and, frankly, unnecessary. Make sure you critically assess whether supplements are right for you.**



## **Popular Supplements**

### **Protein Powders (Whey, Casein, Soy, Pea)**

- Benefits: Supports muscle repair and growth, aids in recovery, and can help meet daily protein needs.
- Ideal For: Those looking to increase protein intake, vegetarians, vegans, and individuals with high protein requirements.

### **Creatine**

- Benefits: Enhances strength, increases lean muscle mass, and improves high-intensity exercise performance.
- Ideal For: Strength and power athletes, and those looking to improve workout performance and muscle gain.

### **Branched-Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs)**

- Benefits: Supports muscle recovery, reduces exercise fatigue, and may aid in muscle protein synthesis.
- Ideal For: Endurance athletes, individuals undergoing intense training, and those looking to reduce muscle soreness.

### **Omega-3 Fatty Acids**

- Benefits: Reduces inflammation, supports heart health, and may improve muscle recovery.
- Ideal For: Everyone, especially those with limited fish intake, seeking to support overall health and reduce inflammation.

### **Multivitamins**

- Benefits: Fills nutritional gaps, supports general health, and ensures adequate intake of vitamins and minerals.
- Ideal For: Individuals with restrictive diets, older adults, and anyone looking to ensure a comprehensive nutrient intake.

### **Vitamin D**

- Benefits: Supports bone health, immune function, and muscle recovery.
- Ideal For: Individuals with limited sun exposure, older adults, and those living in higher latitudes.

### **Ashwagandha**

- Benefits: Reduces stress, improves recovery, enhances strength, and may boost testosterone levels, leading to better muscle growth and performance. It also supports endurance and reduces exercise-induced muscle damage.
- Ideal For: Athletes looking to improve strength, recovery, and stress management, as well as individuals seeking better sleep and overall well-being to support fitness goals.

## How to Choose the Right Supplements

- **Assess Your Needs:** Consider your dietary intake, fitness goals, and any specific health concerns.
- **Research:** Look for supplements backed by scientific evidence and read labels carefully.
- **Quality and Safety:** Choose reputable brands that have been third-party tested for quality and purity.
- **Consult a Professional:** Speak with a healthcare provider or a registered dietitian before starting any new supplement, especially if you have underlying health conditions or are taking medication.

## Risks and Considerations

While supplements can benefit your health and fitness, it's essential to be aware of potential risks. Over-supplementation, interactions with medications, and reliance on supplements instead of whole foods can have adverse effects. Always use supplements as directed and within recommended guidelines.

“

*There's some value to taking a multivitamin, but the human body can only absorb so much. What you're buying here are the ingredients for very expensive urine.*

Sheldon Cooper  
The Big Bang Theory





# SPECIAL DIETS & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There are a range of reasons why your diet may be restricted in some way - this may be due to specific allergies or ethical or religious beliefs. Below we outline items to consider if you have a restricted diet, however if your diet is impacted by restrictions, consider consulting with a nutrition professional to tailor your diet to your individual needs and goals, maximising your health and performance outcomes.

## **Vegetarian and Vegan Diets**

Key Focus:

- **Protein:** Ensure adequate protein intake from a variety of plant-based sources like legumes, tofu, tempeh, and quinoa.
- **Iron and Vitamin B12:** Pay attention to nutrients that are typically more abundant in animal products. Consider fortified foods or supplements if necessary.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Include sources like flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts or consider an algae-based supplement.

## **Low-Carb and Ketogenic Diets**

Key Focus:

- **Energy Sources:** Focus on high-quality fats and protein.
- **Electrolytes:** Monitor and adjust electrolyte intake, especially in the initial phases, to prevent imbalances.
- **Adaptation Period:** Be prepared for an adjustment period where physical performance may temporarily decline as your body adapts to using fat for fuel.

## **Food Allergies and Intolerances**

Key Focus:

- **Alternative Nutrients:** Find alternative sources of nutrients lost by excluding certain foods from your diet.
- **Label Reading:** Become proficient in reading food labels to avoid hidden allergens or triggers.

## **Nutritional Considerations as We Age**

Key Focus:

- **Metabolic rate** decreases as we age, which reduces target caloric intake
- **Increasing Fibre** intake to aid digestion is particularly important for those over 50.
- **Seniors** may benefit from supplementation of vitamins D and B12 along with calcium.

## **Gender-Specific Considerations:**

- **Women:** Pay attention to iron levels, particularly in reproductive years, and calcium for bone health.
- **Men:** Focus on heart health, managing caloric intake and ensuring adequate fiber, omega-3s, and lean protein.





# HYDRATION!

Hydration is a critical component of overall health and plays a significant role in optimising physical performance and recovery.

## **The Importance of Hydration**

Water is essential for virtually every function within the body, including temperature regulation, joint lubrication, nutrient transportation, and waste removal. For athletes and individuals engaged in regular physical activity, adequate hydration is vital for maintaining peak performance and ensuring effective recovery post-exercise.

## **Recognizing the Signs of Dehydration**

Dehydration can significantly impair physical performance and cognitive function, and recognising the early

signs is crucial for prevention. Symptoms include:

- Thirst
- Dry mouth and lips
- Reduced urine output or dark yellow urine
- Fatigue and weakness
- Headache
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

## **Calculating Your Hydration Needs**

Hydration needs can vary widely based on factors such as body size, activity level, climate, and sweat rate. A general guideline is to drink at least 8-10 glasses (about 2 liters) of water per day, but this may increase with exercise and in hot weather. A practical way to monitor hydration is to check the color of your urine, aiming for a pale straw color as an indicator of adequate hydration.

## During Exercise

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends drinking 500ml-600ml of water 2-3 hours before exercise, 240ml during warm-up (if needed), 200ml-300ml every 10-20 minutes during exercise, and 240ml within 30 minutes after exercising.

Of course, adjust these amounts based on your specific needs and conditions.

## The Role of Electrolytes

Electrolytes, including sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium, are minerals that dissolve in body fluids and carry electrical charges. They are critical for maintaining fluid balance, muscle contractions, and nerve signaling.

### Replenishing Electrolytes

During prolonged or intense exercise, especially in hot conditions, sweating can lead to significant electrolyte loss. Replenishing these lost electrolytes is crucial for recovery and maintaining fluid balance. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, electrolyte-enriched drinks, or supplements, particularly for endurance athletes or those with high sweat rates.

## Tips for Staying Hydrated

- Carry a water bottle with you throughout the day to encourage regular sipping.
- Include hydrating foods in your diet, such as fruits and vegetables with high water content.
- Drink water before, during, and after exercise.
- Limit intake of diuretics like caffeine and alcohol, which can increase dehydration.
- Pay extra attention to hydration in hot weather or when increasing the intensity or duration of your workouts.





# NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND STAYING MOTIVATED

Maintaining a healthy diet and staying committed to your nutrition goals can be challenging, especially with the myriad of obstacles life throws our way.

## **Dealing with Plateaus**

Plateaus are a common part of any fitness or nutritional journey. Here's how to overcome them:

- **Reassess Your Goals:** Sometimes, a plateau indicates it's time to set new goals or adjust your approach.
- **Change Your Routine:** Introduce new foods or alter your macronutrient ratios to jumpstart progress.
- **Stay Patient:** Remember that progress is not always linear. Consistency is key.

## **Eating Out and Social Events**

Social gatherings and eating out can present challenges to sticking to your nutrition plan:

- **Plan Ahead:** Look at the menu beforehand and decide what you'll order to make healthier choices.
- **Don't Go Hungry:** Eat a small, healthy snack before attending events to avoid overeating.
- **Balance Your Plate:** Even when options are limited, aim to fill your plate with a balance of macros.

## Combating Cravings

Cravings are normal, but managing them is crucial for staying on track:

- **Identify Triggers:** Notice when and why cravings arise to address the root cause.
- **Healthy Alternatives:** Find healthier options that satisfy your cravings without derailing your diet.
- **Moderation, Not Deprivation:** Allowing yourself small portions of the foods you crave can prevent binge eating later.

## Staying Motivated

Keeping the fire of motivation alive is essential for long-term success:

- **Set Realistic Goals:** Achievable goals can help maintain motivation, offering regular opportunities for celebration.
- **Track Your Progress:** Keep a food diary or use apps to visualise your progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Find Support:** Surround yourself with a community or support group that shares your goals and can offer encouragement.

“

*Don't wait until you've reached your goal to be proud of yourself. Be proud of every step you take toward reaching that goal.*

Unknown

# SIMPLE MEAL IDEAS FOR INSPIRATION

## **Protein-Packed Smoothie**

- Ingredients: 1 scoop of your favorite protein powder, 1 cup of almond milk, ½ banana, ¼ cup of frozen berries, a handful of spinach, and 1 tablespoon of flaxseed.
- Preparation: Blend all ingredients until smooth. Enjoy immediately for a quick, nutrient-packed start to your day.

## **Quinoa Salad with Roasted Vegetables**

- Ingredients: 1 cup of cooked quinoa, assorted vegetables (eg capsicum, zucchini, and cherry tomatoes), 1 teaspoon of olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Optional: feta cheese or chickpeas for protein.
- Preparation: Roast the vegetables with olive oil, salt, and pepper at 200°C for 20 minutes. Mix with quinoa and lemon juice. Add feta or chickpeas as desired.

## **Overnight Oats**

- Ingredients: ½ cup of rolled oats, ¾ cup of unsweetened almond milk, 1 tablespoon of chia seeds, 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract, and a pinch of cinnamon. Toppings: sliced banana, a handful of berries. Optional: a drizzle of honey or agave syrup.
- Preparation: Mix oats, almond milk, chia seeds, vanilla, and cinnamon in a jar. Let sit overnight in the fridge. Top with banana, and berries. Add a drizzle of honey or agave syrup before serving if desired.

## **Turkey and Avocado Wrap**

- Ingredients: Whole grain tortillas, sliced turkey breast, avocado, lettuce, tomato, and mustard.
- Preparation: Lay out the tortilla, layer with turkey, slices of avocado, lettuce, and tomato. Add a spread of mustard, wrap tightly, and enjoy.



### **Grilled Salmon with Asparagus and Quinoa**

- Ingredients: Salmon fillets, asparagus spears, 1 cup of quinoa, olive oil, lemon, salt, and pepper.
- Preparation: Grill salmon and asparagus, seasoned with salt, pepper, and lemon. Serve over cooked quinoa for a balanced, protein-rich meal.

### **Energy Balls**

- Ingredients: 1 cup of dates, ½ cup of almonds, ½ cup of oats, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 tablespoon of chia seeds, and a pinch of salt.
- Preparation: Process all ingredients in a food processor until combined. Roll into balls and refrigerate.

### **Stir-Fried Tofu with Vegetables and Brown Rice**

- Ingredients: Firm tofu, assorted vegetables (broccoli, bell pepper, carrots), soy sauce, garlic, ginger, and brown rice.
- Preparation: Stir-fry tofu and vegetables with garlic, ginger, and soy sauce. Serve over cooked brown rice for a filling vegetarian option.

### **Recovery Smoothie**

- Ingredients: 1 scoop of protein powder, 1 cup of coconut water, ½ banana, ½ cup of pineapple, and 1 teaspoon of turmeric.
- Preparation: Blend all ingredients until smooth. The turmeric adds anti-inflammatory properties, ideal for post-workout recovery.

### **Healthy Eating Tips**

- Use olive oil spray to reduce oil usage
- Balsamic vinegar can be a delicious salad dressing with fewer calories than other options
- Prioritise nutrient dense foods like avocado and sweet potato, but beware these are often high in calories
- Use lean cuts of meat - swap chicken thighs for skinless chicken breast
- Fatty fish like salmon are a great source of Omega 3s
- Egg whites are low in calories and high in protein
- Add non-soluble fibre, like psyllium husks, to smoothies and snacks for a fibre boost that will stave off hunger and help balance blood sugar
- Strawberries & blueberries are surprisingly low in calories, full of nutrients, and satisfy sugar cravings
- Low fat natural Greek yoghurt is high in protein and a great substitute for sour cream or mayonnaise. Alternatively, enjoy with it berries for a low calorie sweet treat.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Nutrition is about achieving wellness. It's not just about losing weight or looking good at the beach. So don't set weight goals solely based on a number on the scale. Instead, focus on how you look, feel, and move, as these indicators often provide a clearer picture of your overall health and fitness progress. Muscle weighs more than fat by volume, meaning your body composition may improve significantly even if the number on the scale doesn't drop.

For measurable goals, consider performance-based metrics such as:

- **Strength Gains:** Track how much weight you can lift or the number of reps you can perform.
- **Endurance Improvements:** Measure running distance or time for cardio exercises.
- **Mobility and Flexibility:** Test range of motion or ability to complete movements pain-free.
- **Body Composition Changes:** Monitor changes in body fat percentage, waist circumference, or progress photos over time.

By combining how you feel and move with measurable achievements, you'll create sustainable and motivating goals that celebrate progress in multiple areas—not just weight.

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*Healthy doesn't equal a number on a scale.*

*Don't set your goals just based on a specific number. Aim for how you feel, how you move, how you look.*

*And don't be led astray by unrealistic and unhealthy bodies you see in movies and online.*

Manny