



AGING STRONG

REAL LIFE DINING GUIDE

A practical member resource for restaurants, social meals, busy days, and staying on track without extreme dieting.

CORE IDEA

You do not need to be perfect when you go out to eat. You need a repeatable structure that helps you make better choices most of the time.

This guide helps you:

- Choose meals that support strength, fat loss, and muscle maintenance.
- Handle diners, restaurants, takeout, holidays, pizza, and social events.
- Avoid the all or nothing mindset that causes people to quit.
- Use simple rules when calories and macros are unknown.

Aging Strong philosophy:

- Protein first.
- Vegetables when possible.
- Control the extras.
- Enjoy real life meals without losing momentum.

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MEMBER NOTE

This is not a medical nutrition plan. If you have diabetes, kidney disease, digestive disease, food allergies, eating disorder history, or medical restrictions, follow your healthcare provider's guidance.



1. How to Use This Guide

This guide is for real life. Members do not live inside a meal plan. They go to diners, birthday parties, weddings, restaurants, vacations, boardwalks, BBQs, family meals, and busy workdays. The goal is not to avoid those situations. The goal is to learn how to handle them with confidence.

The Aging Strong approach is built around structure, not perfection. You can enjoy meals out while still supporting your body composition, strength training, and long term health. The key is knowing which choices matter most.

The 4 Rules That Matter Most

Rule	What to do
Rule 1: Protein first	Start by choosing the protein source. This helps maintain muscle and keeps you fuller longer. Examples: eggs, steak, chicken, turkey, fish, lean beef, or Greek yogurt.
Rule 2: Choose your main energy source	Pick either a carb heavier meal or a fat heavier meal. Do not stack every extra at once. Example: potatoes with eggs, or a burger without fries. Not always both.
Rule 3: Add produce when possible	Vegetables, salad, fruit, or a side of greens add volume and nutrients. This helps the meal feel larger without relying only on starch and fat.
Rule 4: Get back to normal at the next meal	One heavier meal is not failure. Do not punish yourself. Return to your usual structure at the next meal.

COACH JESSE SAYS

A good plan has to work at home and at a restaurant. If your plan only works when everything is perfect, it is not a real plan.



2. The Aging Strong Restaurant Method

When you are eating out, you usually do not know exact calories, oil amounts, portion sizes, or ingredients. That is okay. You can still make a strong decision by using a simple order of priorities.

The 5 Step Restaurant Method

Step	Focus	What It Means
1	Pick protein	Choose eggs, steak, chicken, turkey, fish, shrimp, lean beef, Greek yogurt, or another clear protein source.
2	Choose vegetables or fruit	Add a vegetable, salad, side of broccoli, side of greens, or fruit when available.
3	Choose one main carb	Potatoes, rice, sweet potato, wrap, bun, pasta, tortilla, or bread. Choose the one that makes the meal satisfying.
4	Control fats and extras	Cheese, bacon, creamy sauces, fries, chips, oils, butter, desserts, and alcohol add up fast. Choose intentionally.
5	Leave satisfied, not stuffed	You do not have to clean the plate. Take leftovers or stop when you have had enough.

BEST SIMPLE ORDER

Protein plus vegetables is almost always a solid base. Steak and vegetables, chicken and salad, eggs and fruit, fish and broccoli, or a burger with a side salad can all fit.

This method fits the same structure used in the daily eating plan conversation: high protein meals, moderate portions, enough fuel to support training, and a realistic approach that does not require keto or extreme dieting.

3. The Protein First Plate

The easiest way to stay on track when eating out is to build the plate around protein. Protein helps support muscle maintenance, recovery from training, satiety, and body composition. This matters even more for adults 40+ because the goal is not only weight loss. The goal is to keep muscle and stay capable.

Build Your Plate Like This

Plate Piece	Portion Idea	Examples
Protein anchor	Palm to two palm size portion	Eggs, chicken, steak, turkey, fish, shrimp, lean burger, Greek yogurt
Vegetable or fruit	At least one serving when possible	Broccoli, salad, asparagus, peppers, spinach, berries, melon, apple
Carb choice	One intentional portion	Potatoes, rice, oats, wrap, bun, pasta, tortilla, sweet potato
Flavor and fats	Controlled but not banned	Cheese, avocado, butter, oil, sauce, dressing, nuts
Drink	Keep it simple	Water, unsweetened tea, black coffee, or a diet drink if you use it

Good fat loss plate

- Chicken or steak
- Double vegetable or salad
- Small potato or rice if wanted
- Sauce or dressing on the side

Good maintenance plate

- Protein source
- Vegetable
- Moderate carb portion
- Some added fat or dessert if planned

KEY POINT

You do not need to fear carbs. You need structure. Carbs can fit best around active days, training days, long walks, or when they help you stay consistent.



4. Before You Go Out

The best restaurant decisions usually happen before you sit down. When you show up starving, tired, stressed, or with no plan, it is much easier to over order. A simple pre meal strategy helps you enjoy the meal without turning it into a free for all.

The Pre Restaurant Checklist

Question	Better Decision
Am I very hungry?	Have a protein shake, Greek yogurt, boiled eggs, or a small protein snack before leaving.
Is this a normal meal or a special occasion?	A normal meal means stay structured. A special occasion means enjoy intentionally and get back on track at the next meal.
Do I want carbs, dessert, or alcohol?	Pick the one you want most instead of stacking all three by default.
What protein am I ordering?	Decide your protein first before looking at the extras.
Can I take leftovers?	Ask for a box early if the portion is huge.

COACH JESSE SAYS

If you know you are going to a diner at 3 PM, you can still win the day. Make the next meal protein and vegetables and keep moving forward.

This keeps your plan flexible. For example, if you had a bigger restaurant lunch, dinner can simply be steak, chicken, eggs, fish, or turkey with vegetables. That is not punishment. That is structure.



5. Menu Decision Chart

Use this chart when you are scanning a menu and do not want to overthink it. The goal is to quickly identify better options, okay options, and choices that should be planned more intentionally.

Better Most Days	Okay With Structure	Plan Intentionally
Grilled chicken, steak, fish, eggs, shrimp, turkey, lean burger patty	Burger with bun, omelet with potatoes, tacos, sushi rolls, or a rice bowl with protein	Fried foods, creamy pasta, loaded fries, pizza plus wings, giant dessert, or multiple drinks
Vegetables, side salad, fruit, or broth based soup	Small potato, rice, wrap, tortilla, bread, or a pasta side	Large portions of chips, bread basket, fries, appetizers, sauces, or alcohol
Sauce on the side, dressing on the side, grilled, baked, or broiled	Shared dessert, half portion, or leftovers	All or nothing thinking, skipping meals to compensate, or eating until stuffed

Words That Usually Help

Grilled, baked, broiled, roasted, steamed, lean, side salad, sauce on side, double vegetable, protein bowl, omelet, grilled chicken, steak tips, and seafood.

Words To Watch

Fried, crispy, creamy, smothered, loaded, bottomless, Alfredo, buffet, giant, double cheese, extra sauce, breaded, unlimited, or combo platter.



6. Breakfast, Diners, and Brunch

Diners can work very well with the Aging Strong approach because they usually have eggs, omelets, meat, potatoes, fruit, salads, burgers, and vegetables. The key is ordering with structure instead of letting the menu pull you into pancakes, fries, and dessert all at once.

Meal Type	Strong Choice	Simple Modification
Omelet	Western omelet, veggie omelet, or a cheese omelet with extra eggs	Keep potatoes smaller, add fruit or vegetables, and skip toast if you want potatoes.
Egg plate	2 to 4 eggs with meat and fruit or potatoes	Choose either toast or potatoes. Add a side of fruit.
Sandwich	Egg sandwich, turkey sandwich, or grilled chicken sandwich	Make it open face, skip fries, and add salad, fruit, or vegetables.
Burger	Burger with side salad or vegetables	Skip fries or split them. Consider no bun if you want a lighter meal.
Pancakes or French toast	Best as a planned treat	Add eggs or lean protein and avoid making syrup, bacon, and dessert all one meal.

EXAMPLE

Diner meal: western omelet with cheese, small potatoes, and coffee. If you are still hungry, add extra eggs instead of stacking sweets and fried sides.

7. Burgers, Sandwiches, and Fast Casual

Fast casual meals are not automatically bad. The issue is usually portion stacking: burger plus fries plus soda plus dessert. You can still eat a burger or sandwich, but make the total meal make sense.

Situation	Better Order	Why It Works
Burger place	Single burger or double protein burger with side salad, fruit, or small fries	Keeps protein high and limits automatic extras.
Sandwich shop	Turkey, chicken, roast beef, or egg based sandwich with vegetables	Protein anchor plus a controlled bread portion.
Wawa style meal	Chicken, eggs, turkey, fruit, protein shake, or a salad bowl	Convenient high protein choices when busy.
Wrap or bowl	Chicken bowl with vegetables and rice or beans	A clear protein source plus a structured carb.
Drive thru	Grilled chicken if available, or a burger without large fries plus water or a diet drink	Good enough beats giving up.

When fat loss is the priority

- Choose burger or fries, not always both.
- Avoid creamy sauces.
- Add protein if the meal is small.
- Stop when satisfied.

When maintenance is the priority

- Enjoy the burger.
- Keep the rest of the day structured.
- Walk after the meal if possible.
- Return to normal at the next meal.

8. Italian, Pizza, and Comfort Foods

Italian meals and pizza nights can fit, but they require awareness because bread, pasta, cheese, oil, sauce, and dessert can stack quickly. The goal is not to ban these foods. The goal is to avoid turning one meal into three meals worth of extras.

Food	How To Handle It	Better Add On
Pizza	Have 1 to 3 slices depending on your goal and appetite. Add protein if available.	Side salad, grilled chicken, or water.
Pasta	Choose a protein based pasta when possible. Consider a half portion or leftovers.	Chicken, shrimp, meat sauce, or salad.
Chicken parm	Enjoy it as the main meal. Go lighter on bread and pasta.	Vegetable side or salad.
Bread basket	Decide before the meal. Have some if you want it, but do not mindlessly refill.	Protein first before extra bread.
Creamy dishes	Plan intentionally. These are usually higher calorie.	Split the portion or take leftovers.

**COACH JESSE
SAYS**

Pizza is not the problem. Pizza plus wings plus soda plus dessert plus no structure the next day is the problem.

9. Mexican, Asian, Sushi, and Takeout

Takeout can be one of the easiest places to lose structure because portions are large and meals often combine carbs, fats, sauces, and fried sides. Use the protein first method and choose your carb intentionally.

Restaurant Type	Strong Choices	Watch Outs
Mexican	Fajitas, tacos with grilled meat, or a burrito bowl with chicken or steak, beans, salsa, and vegetables	Chips, queso, sour cream, large burritos, multiple tortillas, and sugary drinks
Chinese	Chicken, beef, shrimp, vegetables, steamed rice, or broth soup	Fried chicken, sweet sauces, large rice portions, egg rolls, and noodles plus rice
Sushi	Sashimi, sushi rolls, miso soup, edamame, and controlled rice portions	Tempura rolls, spicy mayo, multiple specialty rolls, and fried appetizers
Thai	Grilled protein, stir fry with vegetables, or curry with controlled rice	Huge noodle portions, creamy curry plus rice plus appetizers
General takeout	Protein entrée plus vegetables. Save half if the portion is huge.	Eating straight from the container without portion awareness

SIMPLE WIN

For takeout, plate the food instead of eating from the container. This single habit improves portion awareness immediately.

10. Steakhouse, BBQ, Seafood, and Higher Protein Meals

These restaurants can be excellent for Aging Strong members because protein is easy to find. The main decision is usually what comes with the protein: fries, bread, loaded potatoes, creamy sides, alcohol, and dessert.

Restaurant	Best Base	Smart Structure
Steakhouse	Steak, chicken, fish, shrimp, or eggs if it is brunch	Add vegetables. Choose potato, bread, or dessert intentionally.
BBQ	Brisket, pulled chicken, turkey, ribs, or leaner meat if available	Watch sauces, mac and cheese, cornbread, fries, and huge portions.
Seafood	Grilled fish, shrimp, scallops, crab, or salmon	Choose baked potato, rice, or vegetables. Be mindful with butter and fried seafood.
Breakfast steak and eggs	Steak plus eggs	Add fruit or a small potato. Keep pancakes or toast optional.
Family restaurant	Protein entree plus a vegetable side	Ask for sauce on the side and take leftovers.

Great fat loss order

- Steak or chicken
- Broccoli or asparagus
- Side salad
- Water or an unsweetened drink

Great active day order

- Steak or chicken
- Vegetable side
- Potato or rice
- Optional dessert shared



11. Alcohol, Dessert, and Appetizers

Alcohol, dessert, and appetizers are not forbidden, but they should be intentional. These are the foods that often turn a decent restaurant meal into a calorie heavy meal without much extra fullness.

Choice	Better Strategy	Aging Strong Reminder
Alcohol	Limit to 1 to 2 drinks if you choose to drink. Alternate with water.	Alcohol can lower food discipline and affect sleep and recovery.
Dessert	Share dessert or choose a smaller portion.	Enjoy it slowly. You do not need to overcorrect the next day.
Appetizers	Pick protein based appetizers when possible.	Wings, fried appetizers, chips, and creamy dips add up quickly.
Bread basket	Have a piece if you want, but avoid mindless refills.	Bread plus fries plus dessert is where meals climb fast.
Sauces	Ask for sauce or dressing on the side.	Flavor is fine. Losing control of portions is the issue.

PICK ONE RULE

If you want alcohol, dessert, or a heavier appetizer, choose the one that matters most to you. You can have anything, but not everything every time.



12. Social Events, Holidays, and Family Meals

Social meals are emotionally different from regular meals. Food is connected to family, tradition, celebrations, grief, stress, and connection. The goal is not to be the person who cannot enjoy anything. The goal is to stay grounded.

The Social Meal Strategy

Step	Action
Before	Eat normally earlier in the day. Do not starve yourself to save calories. Prioritize protein.
During	Scan the food first. Choose the items you actually want. Build a plate instead of grazing endlessly.
Protein	Find turkey, chicken, beef, eggs, seafood, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, or another protein source.
Treats	Pick favorite treats, not random fillers. Eat them slowly and move on.
After	Return to your normal meal structure at the next meal. No punishment workouts. No guilt spiral.

MINDSET	A strong person can enjoy a birthday meal and still be back on track the next day. Consistency is built over weeks and months, not one perfect dinner.
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13. What to Do After a Higher Calorie Meal

The meal after a heavier meal is where many people either recover well or turn one meal into a full weekend. The key is to avoid panic. You do not need to skip meals, punish yourself, or do extreme cardio.

Do this next

- Drink water.
- Take a walk if possible.
- Return to your normal eating schedule.
- Make the next meal protein plus vegetables.
- Go to bed on time.
- Show up to your next workout.

Do not do this

- Skip all food the next day.
- Punish yourself with excessive exercise.
- Declare the week ruined.
- Weigh yourself repeatedly.
- Turn one meal into several days of overeating.

Reset Meal Examples

Reset Meal	Why It Works
Steak or chicken with vegetables	High protein, filling, simple, and low friction.
Eggs with fruit or vegetables	Easy protein based meal after a heavy restaurant day.
Protein shake plus berries	Useful when busy or not very hungry but you still need protein.
Turkey meatloaf with broccoli	Structured, familiar, filling, and supportive of muscle maintenance.
Greek yogurt with berries	Simple protein option when appetite is lower.

14. Ordering Scripts and Quick Reference Checklist

You do not need complicated language. Simple requests make restaurant meals much easier to manage.

Simple Ordering Scripts

Situation	What To Say
Sauce	Can I have the sauce on the side?
Vegetables	Can I swap the fries for vegetables or a side salad?
Protein	Can I add grilled chicken, shrimp, steak, turkey, or eggs to that?
Portion	Can I get a box with the meal? I may save half for later.
Breakfast	Can I do extra eggs and a small side of potatoes?
Burger	Can I get the burger with a side salad instead of fries?
Italian	Can I do grilled chicken or shrimp with that and sauce on the side?

Before ordering

- What is my protein?
- Do I want carbs, fat, dessert, or alcohol most?
- Can I add vegetables or fruit?
- Will this meal leave me satisfied, not stuffed?

After eating

- Was I intentional?
- Can I return to normal at the next meal?
- Can I take a short walk?
- Did I avoid the all or nothing spiral?

FINAL WORD

Real life eating is a skill. The more you practice structured choices in normal situations, the easier it becomes to stay strong for life.

Aging Strong Fitness

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