HOW TO MEAL PLAN

BASIC GUIDE TO MEAL PLANNING WITH SAMPLE PLANS

Why do you need a meal plan

If you are trying to lose fat, you have two options with food, wing it everyday or create a plan. You are more likely to find success if you have a general plan for eating and are prepared. If you are winging everyday, there is a good chance that you will overeat. Having a plan can range from knowing exactly what you are going to eat for every meal and snack to having some options to choose from everyday. This guide leans toward the more flexible option.

The focus needs to be on changing how you eat for life, not just for a temporary diet. Fat loss will never be permanent, unless you change your eating habits permanently. Don't let choosing what to eat paralyze you to the point of inaction. It will be a trial and error process, you will make mistakes, you will learn along the way, you will refine your process and get better at it as long as you don't quit.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Eat Simple—Keep it simple especially in the beginning, choose 30-40 basic foods items, variety will come from how you cook and how you spice it up.

2. Choose foods that you like—dieting for fat loss does not mean you have to eat food you hate. Eating foods you like will improve adherence.

3. Eat lots of fruits and veggies—Fruits and Veggies are nutrient dense, in other words that are full of vitamins and minerals, and they are relatively low calorie, so you can eat a lot of them.

4. Don't eliminate any food or food group—In order to make a life change don't restrict. The thought process of "I cant eat that" contributes to the lose/gain cycle.

5. Limit high calorie goodies—if there is something you cant live without work it into your plan, but don't make it your whole diet, you will be left hungry and feeling like crap.

6. Cook—plan to cook most of your own meals instead of eating out. You control ingredients and portion size when you cook. It is difficult to know how many calories you are really eating when you eat out.

7. Don't drink your calories—avoid high calorie drinks, it will be harder to stay at your calorie target if you drink all of your calories.

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Page 2

Page 19

What should you track?

For a fat loss goal there are several ways to track progress. Here are the three things I recommend that you should track.

Weight

This is one of the easiest metrics to track. Weigh-in on the same scale first thing in the morning every day. **Weight will fluctuate daily** and it has nothing to do with fat loss/gain. Water retention, hormones, stress and sleep quality can all impact your daily weight. Do not make adjustments or freak out based on a daily weight, it is just one point of data, make adjustments based on 2-4 week trends.

Measurements

Measure your right and left arm, chest, waist, hips and right and left thigh. Don't be surprised if your measurements are not the same on your right and left, most people have a dominate side, it's normal. Take measurements every 1 to 3 months, which ever you prefer. For women, take measurements during the same part of your cycle every month, bloating can skew measurements

Pictures

Take front, side and back views. Wear the same clothes, take pictures at the same angle in the same lighting. Take both flexed and relaxed pictures. It is easier to see progress in a bathing suit or workout clothes. Take pictures weekly or monthly, which ever you prefer. Sometimes seeing where you started will drive you to keep going. Putting the pictures side by side makes it easy to see the changes, if you don't see changes for a few weeks, you will know it may be time to make adjustments.

Table of Contents

STEP 1: Choose foods you like

STEP 2: Decide how much you should eat

STEP 3: Plan your meals

Step 1: Pick foods you like

Part 1: Proteins, Carbs, Fat

In general all food is classified into one of three macronutrients: protein, carbs, and fat. Most foods contain a combination of more than one macro. Which macro a food is classified as is usually based on where most of the calories for that food comes from. Below is a very simplified explanation of how your body uses each macro.
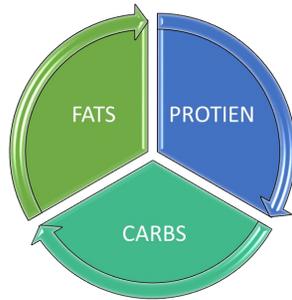
Protein—helps to build and repair body tissue, hormone production

Carbs—used for energy, helps regulate digestion

Fats—can also be used for energy, supports the absorption of vitamins and minerals

Day	Snacks	Calories
Sun	Whey Protein Shake Orange Candy Bar	130+62+240=432
Mon	Ham Deli Slices Cheese Slice Blue Berries Hummus	120+60+84 + 150=414
Tue	Premier Protein Shake Apple Granola Bar	160+97+150=407
Wed	Whey Protein Shake Orange Candy Bar	130+62+240=432
Thu	Ham Deli Slices Cheese Slice Blue Berries Hummus	120+60+84 + 150=414
Fri	Premier Protein Shake Apple Granola Bar	160+97+150=407
Sat	Whey Protein Shake Banana Granola Bar	130+105+150=385
WEEKLY TOTAL SNACKS		2,891
WEEKLY TOTAL ALL FOOD		9,930
DAILY AVERAGE		1,419

Day	Dinner	Calories
Sun	Shrimp Bell Peppers Sweet Potatoes Olive Oil	84+24+ 105+240= 453
Mon	Ground Chicken Lettuce Tomato Taco Shells Low Fat Shredded Cheese	150+3+22+ 150+160= 485
Tue	Pork Tenderloin Green Beans White Potato Butter	120+44+ 163+100= 427
Wed	Shrimp Bell Peppers Sweet Potatoes Olive Oil	84+24+ 105+240= 453
Thu	Ground Chicken Lettuce Tomato Taco Shells Low Fat Shredded Cheese	150+3+22+ 150+160= 485
Fri	Pork Tenderloin Green Beans White Potato Butter	120+44+ 163+100= 427
Sat	Lean Ground Beef Lettuce Tomato Hamburger Bun Squash Cheese Slice Light Mayo	206+3+22+ 110+31+60 +50=482
	WEEKLY TOTAL DINNER	3,212

Ask ten different experts how much you need of each macro and you will get ten different answers. If you run across someone that tells you with absolute certainty that there is only one way that works, they are lying. For fat loss being is calorie deficit is more important than the amount of each macro that you eat. **There is no perfect balance.**

To keep it simple, just make sure you include foods from each group. It is a trial and error process, take the time to learn how your body reacts to food. Are you less hungry when you eat more protein? Do you have more energy when you eat more carbs? Do you sleep better when you eat more fats? Make changes based your preferences.

As you progress, you will learn more about food and will be able to refine your choices, while there is no perfect amount of each macro that you need to eat, there are ranges for each macro that are good to try to target.

But, to prevent the process from being overwhelming in the beginning, just choose foods from each group that you like. Don't focus on trying to get an exact amount of an one macro. As you learn you can decide if you need to target a different macro split based on your goals, but if your goal is fat loss staying below your calorie target will be the most important thing to focus on.

Step 1: Pick foods you like

On the next few pages are lists of proteins, carbs and fats. It is not a complete list, just an example of some common items you could choose from. Pick the ones that you like to eat. Following tip 1, keep it simple. Pick a few items from each list. Make your picks on your personal taste preferences and convenience.

Keep meals and convenience in mind when you make your picks. If you love tacos, make sure to pick items that will allow you to make tacos one night. If you need fast and on the go for breakfast, pick items that do not have to be cooked. If you are on the go for lunch, pick items that can be eaten cold.

EXAMPLES OF KEEP IT SIMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. Have 1 option for breakfast, 2 options for lunch. Then use dinner for variety.
2. Have 1 option for each meal during the week, and use the weekend for variety.
3. Keep the protein selections for each meal the same, but use fruits, vegetables and spices for variety.

Keeping it simple will help adherence, it is easier to track calories, and it is easier to grocery shop (And usually a little more budget friendly)

Day	Lunch	Calories
Sun	Deli Turkey Whole Wheat Bread Cantaloupe Cucumbers Light Mayo	120+120+25+54+50= 369
Mon	Chicken Breast Tortilla Wrap Lettuce Tomato Carrots	123+3+22+25+200= 373
Tue	Deli Turkey Whole Wheat Bread Cantaloupe Cucumbers Light Mayo	120+120+25+54+50= 369
Wed	Chicken Breast Tortilla Wrap Lettuce Tomato Carrots	123+3+22+25+200= 373
Thu	Deli Turkey Whole Wheat Bread Cantaloupe Cucumbers Light Mayo	120+120+25+54+50= 369
Fri	Chicken Breast Tortilla Wrap Lettuce Tomato Carrots	123+3+22+25+200= 373
Sat	Deli Turkey Whole Wheat Bread Cantaloupe Cucumbers Light Mayo	120+120+25+54+50= 369
WEEKLY TOTAL LUNCH		2,595

Sample Meal plan: 1 breakfast, 2 lunch and 4 dinner options.

Day	Breakfast	Calories
Sun	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
Mon	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
Tue	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
Wed	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
Thu	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
Fri	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
Sat	Greek Yogurt Strawberries	130+46=176
WEEKLY TOTAL BREAKFAST		1,232

Protein—Pick 4-6 different proteins that you like to eat. This is not a complete list, add your own items to the list if you need to.

Food	UOM	Calories per UOM	Typical Serving	Calories per serving
Egg Whites	1 Egg	17	2	34
Egg	1 Egg	72	1	72
Shrimp (Cooked)	1 oz	28	3	84
Cod (Cooked)	1 oz	30	3	89
Roast Beef Deli Slices (Will Vary)	1 oz	30	3	90
Halibut (Cooked)	1 oz	31	3	94
Canned White Tuna in Water	1 Can	109	1	109
Canned Salmon	1 Can	116	1	116
Turkey Deli Slices (Will Vary)	1 oz	30	4	120
Pork Tenderloin	1 oz	30	4	120
Ham Deli Slices (Will Vary)	1 oz	40	3	120
Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breast	1 oz	31	4	123
Lean Ground Turkey (93%)	1 oz	32	4	128
Boneless/Skinless Chicken Thighs	1 oz	33	4	130
Greek Yorgurt (Will Vary)	1 Cup	130	1	130
Whey Protein Supplement (Will Vary)	1 Scoop	130	1	130
Ground Chicken	1 oz	38	4	150
Premier Protein Shake	1 Bottle	160	1	160
Boneless Pork Chop	1 oz	44	4	176
Top Round	1 oz	47	4	188
Lean Ground Beef (93%)	1 oz	41	5	206
Eye of Round	1 oz	48	6	285

Carbs—Pick 6-9 different carbs that you like to eat, pick a few from each food group (Vegetables, Fruits, and Grains). This is not a complete list, add your own items to the list if you need to.

Vegetable carbs are typically lower in calories compared to fruits and grains.

Food	UOM	Calories per UOM	Typical Serving	Calories per serving
Lettuce	1 cup shredded	5	0.5	3
Celery	1 Medium	6	1	6
Spinach	1 cup raw	7	1	7
Cabbage	1 cup raw	16	1	16
Tomatoes	1 Medium	22	1	22
Cucumbers	1 Medium	24	1	24
Bell Peppers	1 Medium	24	1	24
Carrots	1 Medium	25	1	25
Cauliflower	1 cup raw	25	1	25
Summer Squash	1 Medium	31	1	31
Green Beans	1 cup cooked	44	1	44
Onions	1 cup raw	64	1	64
Corn	1 Ear Cooked	100	1	100
Sweet Potatoe	1 Medium Cooked	105	1	105
White Potatoe	1 Medium Cooked	163	1	163

If you are looking for inspiration on "What to eat" there are several free resources.

1. www.allrecipes.com—Has a lower calorie section

2. www.publix.com—go to the recipes and planning section call Aprons, there are recipes and simple meal ideas.

3. www.tyson.com—has a great recipe section for chicken and pork

4. www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com—great ideas for beef recipes

5. www.choosemyplate.gov—Has free recipes and cookbooks to download

6. www.skinnytaste.com—Has tons of recipes and sample meal plans

What do I make with this food?

Using the foods that you choose, come up with meals for each day.

Design the meals to fit your life:

1. If you rush to get out of the house in the morning, make breakfast mobile, think breakfast bar or yogurt.

2. Not hungry in the morning, skip breakfast, timing of when to eat is completely up to you

3. Don't have a lot of time for lunch, keep it simple, think wrap or a sandwich

4. Always hungry at night, save the biggest meal for then

5. Hungry all the time, plan for snacks

The next few pages contain a sample meal plans that follows the keep it simple strategy.

Fruit carbs are typically in the medium calorie range.

Food	UOM	Calories per UOM	Typical Serving	Calories per serving
Strawberries	1 cup	46	1	46
Cantaloupe	1 cup	54	1	54
Blackberries	1 cup	62	1	62
Orange	1 Medium	62	1	62
Blueberries	1 cup	84	1	84
Watermelon	1 cup	46	2	92
Apple	1 Medium	97	1	97
Jelly	1 Tbsp	50	2	100
Banana	1 Medium	105	1	105
Pinapple	1 cup	143	1	143

Grain carbs are typically on the higher end of calories

Food	UOM	Calories per UOM	Typical Serving	Calories per serving
Oatmeal - Quaker	1 Packet	100	1	100
Hamburger Bun (Will Vary)	1 Bun	110	1	110
Whole Wheat Bread	2 Slices	120	1	120
Cereal (Will Vary)	1 Cup	147	1	147
Granola Bar (Will Vary)	1 Bar	150	1	150
Hard Taco Shells (Will Vary)	1 Shell	50	3	150
Tortilla (Will Vary)	1 Large	200	1	200
Average Size Candy Bar	1 bar	240	1	240
White Rice Cooked	1 Cup	242	1	242

Fats—Pick 3-4 different fats that you like to eat. This is not a complete list, add your own items to the list if you need to.

Food	UOM	Calories per UOM	Typical Serving	Calories per serving
Light Mayo	1 Tbsp	50	1	50
Cheese Slice	1 Slice	60	1	60
Coconut Shred	1 Tbsp	40	2	80
Avacodo	1 oz	45	2	90
Butter - Salted Sweet Cream	1 Tbsp	100	1	100
Milk 2 %	1 Cup	120	1	120
Ranch Salad Dressing	1 Tbsp	65	2	130
Hummus	1 Tbsp	50	3	150
Cashews	1 oz	157	1	157
Cheese Low Fat Shred	1 oz	160	1	160
Sun Flower Seeds	1 oz	165	1	165
Almonds Dry Roasted	1 oz	170	1	170
Peanuts Dry Roasted	1 oz	170	1	170
Peanut Butter	1 Tbsp	90	2	180
Macadamia	1 oz	204	1	204
Olive Oil	1 Tbsp	120	2	240
Sesame Oil	1 Tbsp	120	2	240
Canola Oil	1 Tbsp	124	2	248

STEP 2: How much should I eat?

Set your calorie target. You can use any calorie calculator online or on an app to get your starting point, all of them are wrong and all of them are right. The calorie target is just a starting point, you will need to make adjustments based on actual results. A simple method for weight loss is 8x-12x your current body weight. This will be low enough for most to lose weight at a moderate pace. Below is a sample calculation. Use your body weight to calculate your starting point.

Current Body Weight	Calories per lb	Calorie target per day	State
200	8	200x8=1600	Fast loss, but miserable
200	10	200x10=2000	Moderate loss for most
200	12	200x12=2400	Slow loss
200	15	200x15=3000	Maintenance for most