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# Food Prep

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The Basic Elements of Preparing Your Meals



Ballistic Strength Nanaimo

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*1st Edition*

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# Introduction

Most people eat the same thing every day, week after week. We are actually pretty boring. It's only when we remove the freedom to choose what to eat that we begin to crave variety. The problem is that choice is also what leaves you standing in front of the fridge with the door open scanning for the tastiest looking morsel, when in reality all your body wants is fuel to keep going. As the day draws on, this reliance on choice becomes more and more biased towards comfort foods.

**Have your food ready.** It is generally agreed upon by most physique athletes (those for whom body composition change is their job or passion), that food prep is the first step to ensuring a successful body transformation. At its most basic elements, food prep requires 3 things:

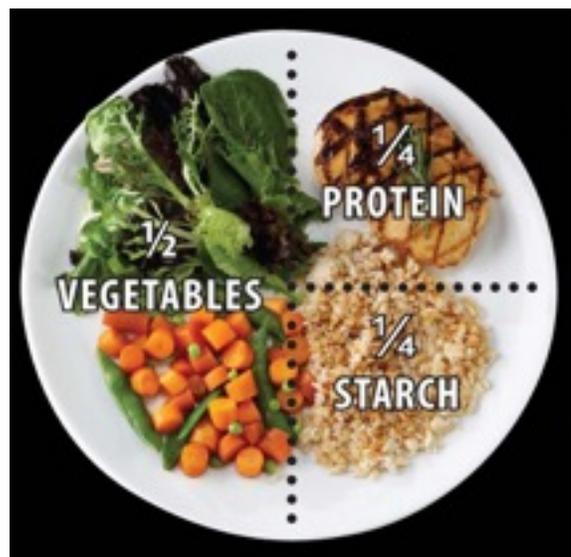
1. Ready-to-serve protein
2. Ready-to-serve starch
3. Ready-to-serve fibrous vegetables

## What is a meal plan?

A meal plan is a blueprint of your daily food intake. It addresses *what* you eat, *how much* you eat, and even *when* you eat. This is important when pursuing food and fitness related goals because the lack of an action strategy leaves you subject to your own devices.

Food grazing is not a plan. Grazing or snacking is instinct based, and there are many cues that trigger us to eat, unrelated to our goals or actual physiological hunger. We are also creatures of habit, so we must establish habits conducive to reaching our goals. Your habits should include:

2. Eating evenly sized portions (*meals*)
3. Eating protein at each meal (*20-30g / meal*)
4. Eating meals at regular intervals (*e.g. 7am, 10am, 12:30pm, etc.*)



When you establish these habits, you become acutely aware of how much food you require daily (*how much food to reach your goals*). As such, when social engagements come up you will have a better idea of how to adjust your intake, but chances are, if you implement these habits you will be able to stay within your limits intuitively.

**The average person makes about 200 food-related decisions each day.** The science also says that the more decisions you make, the less “*willpower*” you have. When you wake up, critical decisions are easier to make. As you near the end of your day, the fatigue of accumulated physical and mental activities leaves you making snap judgements in situations: *like what to eat for dinner after a long day of work*.

**Having a food menu you can follow as mindlessly as brushing your teeth removes the need for these daily decisions.** This saves you time and effort, but it also provides you more mental stamina for other important decisions throughout the day. Making food decisions isn’t even really part of our psychological biology. It’s a byproduct of a society preoccupied with commercialized food production. Brian Wansink, Ph.D., Professor of Marketing and Nutritional Science remarks, “*it’s simply not in our nature to pause after every bite and contemplate whether we’re full*”.

Negative mindlessness leads to overeating, but when you become mindful of your eating habits, you re-engineer your behaviour to eat with positive mindlessness. No one goes to bed skinny and wakes up fat. A pattern of behaviour repeated over a long enough timeline is what leads to change - *good or bad*. Wouldn’t it be great to go to bed and wake up with the body you’ve always wanted? Well, it may not be that easy, but mindless overeating can be substituted with mindless healthy eating given the right strategies.

### **Re-engineering Strategy #1: Think 20% More or Less**

- cut out starch by 20%
- increase veggies by 20%

**Food policies and trade-offs** are useful tools. A food trade-off basically means: “*I can eat x if I do y*”. If you know you’re going to an event where there will only be snacks available, you may eat a bit lighter during the course of the day to offset your snacking later on. Of course, it will always help to portion out your snacks too.

# Proteins

## *Animal vs. Plant*

Protein is made up of amino acids. **There are 20 amino acids; 9 are essential.**

*Essential* means your body cannot synthesize it on its own. **Vitamin C** is an example of an essential nutrient. Our bodies cannot make it; we must receive it from the foods we eat (e.g. citrus fruits), otherwise there are negative side-effects (e.g. scurvy).

### Complete Protein

A protein that contains all 9 essential amino acids in optimal quantity and proportion is called a complete protein. Your body is literally protein & water (mostly). To **maintain, grow, or repair** this body you need the *essential amino acids*. It makes sense that, being omnivores, we eat other animals to satisfy this biological requirement.

Some plants contain moderate amounts of protein as well, such as *legumes, nuts, seeds, grains, and some vegetables*. These proteins have a different **amino acid profile** than animal sources. **Soy** is low in *methionine*, while **rice** is low in *lysine* - 2 essential amino acids.

**Eating for protein can be difficult to do with plant sources.** *Beans* are about 71% carbs, 27% protein and 2% fat. *Almonds* are about 77% fat, 14% protein, and 9% carbs. As you can see, only eating beans would likely cause you to *over-consume carbs*, while eating nuts would likely result in *over-consuming fat*.

### Harmonizing

Combining grains and legumes to achieve a more **complimentary amino acid profile** can work, and it has been done for centuries by many cultures.

Table 1

On a per-meal basis, I recommend 25-30g of protein. When consuming a strictly vegetarian diet, achieving this value becomes impractical. This is why vegan/vegetarian protein powders were made. These powders isolate the protein and remove most of the fat or carbs.

TYPE	COOKED Wt.	Amount (g)	kcal	protein (g)
ANIMAL	Atl. Salmon	125	260	25
	Sirloin Steak	84	173	25
	Cottage cheese (0%)	1 cup (250g)	160	30
	Chicken breast	84	139	26
	Pork tenderloin	112	136	25
	Rockfish	100	128	26
	Egg White (cup)	1 cup	117	26
PLANT	Black Beans (cup)	1 <sup>3/4</sup> cup	420	26

Different proteins sources have different values based on water, carbohydrate, and fat content.

## *Fish*

You want to prioritize lean fish. Fattier fish can be phased in with special concessions such as removing your starch and replacing it with vegetables. This would help compensate for the additional calories from fat.



## Technique 1

Using coconut flour to “bread” your fish. Fry or bake with minimal oil. Season with salt & garlic powder.



## Technique 2

Poaching your fish.



# *Chicken or Pork*

You want to prioritize chicken breast. Dark meat or fattier cuts can be phased in with special concessions such as removing your starch and replacing it with vegetables. This would help compensate for the additional calories from fat.

## Technique 1

Bake your chicken at 350 degrees and check for doneness after 25-30min. Dice and season, place in a large serving container to be measured out as needed.



## Technique 2

BBQ your chicken at a minimum of 350 degrees and check for doneness after 25-30min. Dice and season, place in a large serving container to be measured out as needed.

## Technique 3

Slow-roast your pork in a slow-cooker along with homemade BBQ sauce (see recipe).

# *Beef*

You want to prioritize loins and rounds (e.g. tenderloin, sirloin, inside round / eye of round, extra-lean ground beef). Fattier cuts can be phased in with special concessions such as removing your starch and replacing it with vegetables. This would help compensate for the additional calories from fat.

## Technique 1

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees F (260 degrees C). Season the roast with salt and pepper and place in a roasting pan or baking dish. Do not cover or add water.

Place the roast in the preheated oven. Reduce the temperature to 475 degrees F (245 degrees C). Roast for 21 minutes (seven minutes per pound) then turn off the oven and let the roast sit in the hot oven for 2 1/2 hours. Do not open the door at all during this time!

Remove the roast from the oven, the internal temperature should have reached at least 145 degrees F (65 degrees C). Carve into thin slices to serve.



## Technique 2

Pan fry your steak.

Place a thick walled pan on a burner at med-high heat, with 1 tbsp of oil. Sprinkle pan with coarse salt & cracked pepper. Sear 1" steak for 3-4 minutes; sprinkle top side with salt & pepper and flip to sear for additional 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and let sit for 5 minutes before cutting.

Have a variety of proteins available in your fridge.



# Starches

## *Carbs are not the enemy*

### **What are carbohydrates and what are they for?**

*“Unlike proteins, which are used as building materials, carbohydrates are used for energy, particularly for high-intensity exercise. Sports nutritionist Dr. Michael Colgan, author of “Optimum Sports Nutrition,” calls carbohydrates “premium fuel.”*

*I’ve never heard a better definition. Fats are also used for fuel, but the difference is that fats don’t burn as efficiently as carbohydrates. It’s a common misconception that fat is a more efficient fuel source, but it’s not – it’s simply a more concentrated fuel source (nine calories per gram for fat versus four calories per gram for carbohydrate).*

*Carbohydrates are the body’s preferred and most efficient energy source. Whenever carbohydrates are restricted, energy levels and performance usually decline.” - **Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle**, Tom Venuto*

### **Common forms of starches:**

- rice
- potato
- bread
- pasta
- grains (corn, barley, etc.)
- beets
- carrots
- squash

Table 2

	Amount (cup/serving)	kcal	carbs (g)
Bagel	1	220	39
Rice (cooked)	1	205	45
Tortilla	1	180	29
Corn	1	177	41
Green Peas	1	124	22
Potato	1	116	28
Acorn Squash	1	115	30
Fruit (1 piece / cup)	1	80-100	25
Beet	1	74	16
Carrot	1	54	12
Green Beans	1	44	10

Different starches have different values based on water, protein, and fat content.

## Rice

Get a rice cooker. Use it often. If you get a rice-cooker with a steam tray that's *even better!*



## *Root Vegetables*

Cup for cup, potatoes are almost half the calories of cooked rice. This is due to higher water content. Carrots and beets are about half the calories for the same volume of white or sweet potatoes. Carrots and beets can be boiled or roasted. Potatoes should be baked or roasted, although they can be boiled and then tossed with herbs (e.g. fresh dill).

## *Fibrous Vegetables*

These types of veggies can be eaten almost with careless abandon (*as long as they're not deep fried in beer batter*). Eye-balling your portions with these foods is perfectly acceptable.

- broccoli
- cauliflower
- cabbage
- onion
- radish
- tomatoes
- cucumbers
- lettuce
- mushrooms
- peppers
- zucchini
- eggplant

## Roasting Potatoes

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Wash and coarsely chop potato into wedges. Toss with herbs/spices and minimal oil. Try making two batches, each a different seasoning. Grill/roast until tender and crisp (20-30 min).

## Cooking Veggies

Chop veggies into 1" pieces (minus sprouts). Grease and heat large wok on med-high. Add ingredients 1 by 1 allowing about 1-2 min searing time in between each ingredient. Add sprouts and nuts last, season as desired (garlic, lemongrass, soya sauce, etc.).





Valeur nutritive	
Per 1/2 cup (125 g)	
Pour 1/2 tasse (125 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	80
Fat / Lipides	0.3 g 0 %
Saturated / saturés	0.2 g
+ Trans / trans	0 g 1 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol	5 mg
Sodium / Sodium	440 mg 18 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides	4 g

## Fruits

Pairing fruits with protein can be effortless too. Cottage cheese is a great low-fat pairing for fruit. If you purchase 2 (750g) tubs of low-fat cottage cheese, that gives you 6 (30g) servings of protein for around \$9. Spread that out through the week and you've got some great variety in your meals and quality nutrients each day!

### Directions:

- In a medium bowl, combine cottage cheese with flavour extract of your choice (e.g. vanilla, almond, orange, lemon, blueberry, etc.) and one sweetener packet
- Top with 1/2 cup blueberries and 1 fruit serving

**Estimated kcal = 300-320**

**Protein = 30g**

**Carbs = 45-50g**

### \*Note

*When on an "off-season" phase or when your at the start of your prep or program, use full-fat cottage cheese. Systematically introduce lesser fat cheeses as needed throughout your program to elicit further weight-loss.*

**Try to have some of these no / low-kcal seasonings on hand for variety:**

- basil pesto
- vinegar(s)
- soya sauce
- salt & pepper
- frozen/fresh lemongrass
- garlic (fresh/frozen)
- low-fat salad dressing
- non-sugary hot-sauces
- canned chipotle peppers
- Maggi seasoning
- Worcestershire sauce
- scented oils (sesame, herb, etc.)
- horseradish
- Mustard or honey mustard
- Clubhouse/Mrs. Dash seasonings
- Lemons / limes
- Flavour extracts or emulsions

# Mindless Margin

*Manipulate ingredients, maintain meals, reinforce habits*

Sandwiches



Whatever your current sandwich recipe, there are seamless ways to lower your overall calorie intake, while not sacrificing the importance of maintaining food rituals. You can use the following method to lower your calories, or to shift your macros.

## *Lowering calories*

	Energy (kcal)	Deficit	Deficit / week
Old Mill Bagel	220 kcal	0 kcal	0 kcal
PC Wheat Thin	190 kcal	30 kcal	210 kcal
W/W English Muffin	150 kcal	70 kcal	490 kcal

## *Trading Macros (remove carbs, add protein)*

Per 350 kcal sandwich (save 20kcal for condiments/veggies)			
	Energy (kcal)	Deli Meat (g)	Total kcal
Old Mill Bagel	220 kcal	110 g	330 kcal
PC Wheat Thin	190 kcal	140 g	330 kcal
W/W English Muffin	150 kcal	180 g	330 kcal

(Meat values based on 100 kcal / 100 g average.)