



BY DABBS
FITNESS

NUTRITION GUIDE



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INTRO

Along with training and sleep, proper nutrition is key when it comes to achieving your fitness goals. No matter how hard you push yourself in the gym, if your diet is not optimised to support your recovery and performance during training sessions, your progress will be severely hampered.

Whether your goal is to lose weight, build muscle, or simply feel healthier, following this guide will ensure that you've got all bases covered.



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CALORIES

Losing Weight

Weight loss is a slow process that requires consistency and patience, especially when aiming to maintain hard-earned muscle mass from your training. In order to lose weight, you must be in a caloric deficit. This deficit can be created by consuming fewer calories, burning more calories by increasing your activity level, or ideally a combination of both.

We recommend starting with a moderate deficit of 300-500 calories below maintenance level per day (the amount of calories required to maintain your current weight) and as you begin to lose weight you can adjust this where necessary. Aim to lose ~1% of your body weight each week to ensure maintenance of muscle mass.

Gaining Weight

If you are already lean and want to add some muscle mass then a caloric surplus may be optimal. Gaining muscle whilst minimising accumulation of fat also requires patience, and so it's crucial to begin with a small surplus and adjust when necessary. We recommend a surplus of 200-500 calories above maintenance with the aim of gaining 0.25-0.5% of your body weight per week. Tracking your weight each week is crucial to ensure you don't gain too much weight too quickly.



MACRONUTRIENTS

Carbohydrates

Many people avoid carbohydrates when dieting, however, since they are your primary energy source during high intensity training sessions we advise against completely cutting them from your diet.

Rather than eliminating carbs altogether, start by swapping out simple sugars such as white bread, pastries, and sugary drinks for complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

Healthy Carbohydrate Sources:

- Brown rice
- Sweet potatoes
- Oats
- Whole grain bread
- Beans
- Fruits
- Vegetables

Pre- and Post-Training:

Since carbohydrates are your primary energy source during training, we recommend consuming a moderate amount of easily digestible carbs 1-2 hours before your workout. Consuming a larger portion of carbohydrates alongside protein after your workout is also key for replenishing glycogen stores and aiding recovery.



Protein

Of the three macronutrients, protein should be prioritised most. Protein is essential for muscle growth, repair, and maintenance. Adequate protein intake supports the development of lean muscle mass and ensures optimal recovery from your training.

How Much Protein Do You Need?

If you are looking to **maintain or gain weight**, we recommend consuming between 1.6-2.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. Therefore, to calculate your minimum protein requirement per day, simply multiply your body weight (kg) by 1.6. For example, an individual weighing 80 kg should aim to consume a minimum of 128 g of protein per day.

$$\text{Body weight (kg)} \times 1.6$$

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Minimum Daily Protein requirement (g)

If your goal is to **lose weight**, we recommend consuming more protein to minimise muscle loss during your dieting phase. Aim to consume between 2.3-3.1 grams of protein per kg of body weight per day. Leaner individuals should aim for the upper end of this range, whereas those with a higher body fat percentage should aim for the lower end. Therefore, an individual with a high body fat percentage weighing 100 kg should aim to consume a minimum of 230 g of protein per day when trying to lose weight.

If possible, we recommend you aim to split your protein evenly across your various meals throughout the day.



Healthy Animal Protein Sources:

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Eggs
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Lean Beef
- Whey
- Casein

Healthy Plant Protein Sources:

- Soy
- Tofu
- Pea Protein
- Lentils
- Quinoa
- Chickpeas
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Seitan



Fats

Fats are often demonised when discussing dieting, however consumption of healthy fats is crucial for supporting key bodily functions such as hormone regulation, nutrient absorption, and brain health. We recommend aiming for 20-35% of your daily calories to come from healthy sources of fat.

Healthy Fat Sources

- Avocados
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Fatty Fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines)
- Olive Oil
- Dark Chocolate



HYDRATION

Staying adequately hydrated is crucial for optimal performance in the gym, as well as overall health. Proper hydration ensures your body functions efficiently, regulates temperature, delivers nutrients to cells, and removes waste products.

Hydration and Training

Hydration requirements vary among individuals based on factors such as body weight, intensity and duration of exercise, climate, and individual sweat rates.

It's important to begin your workout well hydrated from fluid consumption throughout the day. We recommend aiming for 500-600 ml of water 2-3 hours before exercise, followed by another 250-300 ml within 30 mins of your training session.

During your workout, aim to consume 200-300 ml of water every 10-20 mins, and consider sports drinks containing electrolytes for longer, more intense workouts.

Following your training session, consume 500-750 ml of water for every pound of body weight lost during exercise. Consider including additional sodium in your post workout meal or drink in order to restore electrolyte balance.



RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTS

There are many supplements available on the market but very few have strong scientific backing to support your health and fitness. Below are the supplements we recommend you consider taking.

Protein Powder

If you struggle to get enough protein in your diet then protein supplements can be a very valuable tool to maximise your progress in the gym. Supplements such as whey protein are some of the best sources of protein, containing all of the essential amino acids you need for muscle growth and repair. Whey protein is also absorbed very quickly making it a great option if you need a quick protein boost.

Recommendations for Use

Protein shakes are commonly consumed post workout however they can be taken any time of day to increase your overall intake. Mix a scoop with milk or water for a shake, or you can add protein powder to a smoothie as part of a meal/snack.

Remember protein supplements should supplement your diet, they should not be used as a replacement for whole food sources of protein.



Creatine

Of all the supplements on the market, creatine is one of the few with strong scientific backing. Creatine supplementation has been proven to enhance performance during high intensity activities (weightlifting, sprints, jumps) in the gym which in turn may lead to more muscle growth. Creatine may also enhance recovery from training and it has even been shown to benefit brain function.

Recommendations for Use

For optimal results, take 3-5 g of creatine every day. This dose can be taken pre- or post-workout either with water or another drink such as juice or a protein shake.

Creatine is generally safe for most healthy adults, but some may experience mild side effects like stomach upset, cramping, or weight gain due to water retention. If you experience any concerning side effects, discontinue use and consult your doctor.



Caffeine

Caffeine is another well researched ergogenic aid that can enhance your performance in the gym. Not only will caffeine increase alertness and focus but it may also have positive effects on strength, power, and endurance.

Recommendations for Use

For optimal results, consume caffeine 30-60 mins prior to your session to allow sufficient time for absorption and peak effects. This can be obtained from various sources with pre-workout supplements often containing the most caffeine, along with other compounds which may enhance performance. However, we recommend choosing the caffeine source you prefer most, whether it be coffee, tea, energy drinks, or even caffeine pills.

If you train in the evening, we advise against consuming caffeine prior to your session as consuming caffeine within 8 hours of going to bed can negatively affect your sleep, which in turn will affect your recovery.

Beta-Alanine

Beta-alanine supplementation is most notable for its potential to enhance performance in high-intensity exercises lasting 1-10 minutes, like sprinting, weightlifting, and HIIT workouts. Therefore, if your goal is to improve your endurance then beta-alanine is a supplement you should consider.

Recommendations for Use

We recommend consuming 4 to 6 grams, split into multiple smaller doses throughout the day for optimal results. Combining beta-alanine with creatine may have additional benefits for performance. Note that some individuals may experience a harmless tingling sensation in the skin after taking beta-alanine. This is a common and temporary side effect and is not harmful.



CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TODAY



Five colours on your plate

When you prepare your meals, you should always aim for a variety of colours on your plate. A variety of colours will provide you with the necessary vitamins, minerals, and nutrients to support your training, boost your immune system, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Benefits go far beyond training and may include improved bone health, better hair, skin, nails and better hormonal balance to name just a few.

Preparation is key

If you want to change your nutrition, you need to make a conscious effort to prepare and plan your meals ahead. Plan your shopping list. Prepare food in advance to take to work with you, or to have in the fridge for when you come home tired. This minimises the risk of you making poor choices and sets you up for sustainable success.

Focus on the basics

Many people make the mistake of overcomplicating things, but nutrition doesn't have to be complicated. Ensure you drink enough water, hit your calorie and protein targets, and that you're consuming regular high quality meals before looking at supplements for example. Make small, sustainable changes over time, and then improve upon that base.





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