How To Series

How to calculate your calorie goal

Assumptions

1. You have no underlying health conditions
2. You have no hormonal issues
3. You have no digestive issues
4. You have no nutrient deficiencies

If you are concerned about your health regarding nutrition it would be advisable to seek out the help of your GP or Functional Medicine Practitioner to guide you with specific conditions.

What are you eating now?

We can use your current caloric intake as a guide to what your target should be, and in fact this is going to be a better way to make adjustments to your calorie goals than using a formula that just spits out an answer.

1. Download MyFitnessPal, a free app that you can use on your phone or computer

2. Log your food accurately for 7 days (this includes ALL food and drinks, snacks, sauce, sugar in your tea …. EVERYTHING that goes into your mouth must be logged for this to be accurate.)

3. We can then take an average calorie number for the 7 days by adding all 7 total caloric intakes together and dividing by 7 (example below)

Day	Total Calories
1	2512
2	2742
3	2689
4	2354
5	2589
6	2956
7	2746

Total average calories	2655

When we have an average calorie number we can use a calorie calculator to work out what your estimated calories should be taking into consideration your exercise level and BMR.

How to calculate your BMR

Your basal metabolic rate is the number of calories that you burn at rest just being alive. This gives us a baseline to work from for understanding our total calorie needs.

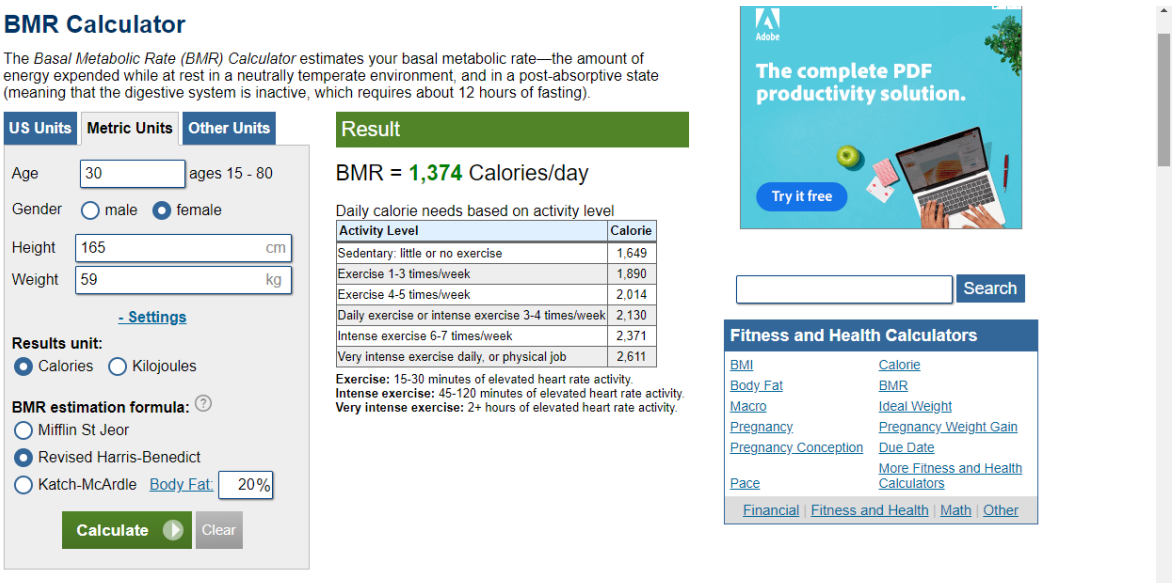
There are plenty of pre-made BMR calculators online and these would be a good place to start. I clicked on the first link I found when I searched for BMR calculator and this gave me the option of using 3 different formulas.

My BMR was calculated based on my age, my height, my gender and my weight.

It spits out a number (see green section) and it came up between 1300-1400 kcal / day depending on which equation I used.

We then apply a physical activity factor to give us an estimate of our TOTAL calories / day.

I am active 4-5 times a week at least so I probably fall somewhere between the 2014-2130kcal which seems about right to me. I track every day and it comes in around 2000-2200 varying on training days/appetite changes and circumstances.



What if my goal is different from my current intake?

In this case we need to bring the two closer together in incremental stages. It depends on how big the difference is and what your goals are. We need to ensure that we are not pushing the body into 'self defence mode' by lopping off a huge chunk of calories to fall in line with the target.

Let me give you an example.

Person A	
Current calories (7 day average)	2800kcal/day
Calorie target (based on equation)	2300kcal/day
Example caloric deficit increments	
Week 1-3	2600kcal/day
*Week 3-5	2450kcal/day
*Week 6+	2300kcal/day

There is a sizeable gap here between the current intake and the goal. Lopping off 600kcal from a days intake would be significant. 500Kcal is equivalent to 2 small meals, or 1 large meal for a female. If you imagine this in your day and how you would miss this amount of food and how it would affect your appetite, mood and energy.

So we need to consider an incremental drop off over some weeks to slowly work down to the desired level. Not only will this mediate appetite, energy, cravings and mood, it will also protect your metabolism and help you to lose weight in a safe and healthy way

Feeling overly hungry and having cravings is an uncomfortable and undesireable situation especially if your goal is weight-loss related.

Should I keep dropping calories?

*There is an argument to keep your calories as high as possible for as long as possible regardless of what the formula says. After all, they are just numbers and you are dealing with your body and it's metabolism. Becoming aquainted with how your body responds to a deficit will be a really powerful thing and you will be in more control than ever before.

If you drop your calories like in the example above by 200, and this stimulates a healthy weight loss that is consistent and easy to manage (ie you're not fighting hunger and energy issues) then there really is no reason to keep dropping your calories any further UNTIL you reach a plateau. We want to hold back on the deficit for as long as possible so that we have room to manouvre when/if that plataeu happens.

Disclaimer

The information being shared here is to be used at your own discretion and Rossell Fitness is not responsible for any issues that arise as a result of following this advice. If you are unsure, please seek out the advice of a medical professional before making any changes.