

TFCGG

Game Plan

**Break Down:
Calories, Macros,
and how they affect
Body Composition**

Introduction

This is a document that I have wanted to create for you guys for a long time now. This PDF is going to thoroughly break down calories, macronutrients, and how to know what to consume to help you work toward your body composition goals in a healthy and sustainable way.

I have held off doing this for two reasons:

1. It is extremely long. This is not a light and fluffy piece of content. It's going to require you sitting down and taking the time to read it if this is something that interests you. Also if I'm being totally honest, doing this was a pretty daunting task because I wanted to make sure it was thorough, easy to understand, and done right!

2. I was afraid. You see, the following information is all based in science. I am going to explain in detail how to calculate your calorie and macronutrient needs in order to work toward your body composition goals in a safe and healthy way IF you happen to have body composition goals. I was afraid that by sharing this information, I would be accidentally perceived as pushing these concepts on anyone, which is the exact opposite of what I am trying to do!

The entire purpose of this document is to break down information in a clear and concise way to those who want it. I need to make very clear who this is NOT for:

- Anyone who is struggling with body dysmorphia, an eating disorder of any kind, or is in recovery.
- Anyone with any fear that the topic of calories or weight might trigger any form of obsessive or unhealthy tendencies or thoughts.

This is going to be a long explanation, but I feel that it's important for you guys to have this as a resource. Whether you have any body composition goals that you are working toward or not, this is valuable information to have, even to help you break through all the myths and misinformation that is constantly being thrown at us.

Introduction

I want to make it very clear before beginning this, that I am in NO WAY giving you this information because I want you to start tracking your calories, or to have body composition goals at all! I am sharing this information with you because I want you to understand scientifically WHY weight loss and weight gain works the way it does, because you deserve to be informed! I could simply just hand you the game plan with zero context, but you deserve more than that! I want you to understand how energy works, and why food really is fuel.

Ready? Let's begin.

What is a calorie?

A calorie is a unit of measurement. It measures the amount of energy in the food, drinks, and literally everything that we consume. Everything we do in life requires this energy to allow us to function. Breathing, walking, laughing, picking up your baby....it all takes energy (measured in calories) to be able to do.

What is a macronutrient?

These are nutrients that are needed in large amounts by our bodies for energy, growth, and for our bodies to function! There are 3 macronutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. All the food we eat and calories we consume (other than alcohol) are made up of these three things!

Calories in each macronutrient:

- Proteins have 4 calories per 1 gram
- Carbohydrates have 4 calories per 1 gram
- Fats have 9 calories per 1 gram

So literally every food you have ever eaten in your life have been made up of some combination of the three macronutrients. Pretty simple, right?

Calculating calories for weight loss, weight gain, and weight maintenance.

In order to lose weight, a person needs to be in a caloric deficit. To keep it simple: they need to be burning more calories over an extended period of time than they are taking in.

The first thought that most people have after hearing this is "I need to be in as big of a caloric deficit as possible because I want to lose a lot of fat/I want to lose fat fast". That thought is the biggest mistake you will ever make when it comes to your mindset surrounding dieting.

When it comes to fat loss: SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE. What does this mean? Let's say someone's maintenance calories are 2000 (aka they could consume 2000 calories each day, and with their normal activities/workouts they wouldn't gain or lose any fat). Rather than jumping to extremes, starving themselves, and feeling MISERABLE by eating 1,200 calories each day, a smart person who wanted to lose fat would put themselves in a SLIGHT deficit by eating somewhere around 1,700 - 1,800 calories each day. Extreme deficits aren't only unsustainable, but they lead to bingeing, unhealthy obsessions surrounding food, health side effects, and weight gain.

The slower and steadier that fat loss happens, the more likely that it will be kept off long term. Not to mention the fact that you will be happier, more well fed, and have more energy.

In order to gain weight, a person needs to be in a caloric surplus. To keep it simple: they need to be consuming more calories over an extended period of time than they are burning.

You can think of weight gain working in the exact opposite way as weight loss! Just like you don't want to lose weight quickly, you don't want to gain it quickly either. If you have a weight gain goal, putting yourself in a slow and steady caloric surplus is also the strategy you'll want to take.

Calculating calories for weight loss, weight gain, and weight maintenance.

So what is weight maintenance? You've probably guessed it by now, but if you are maintaining your current weight, it means you are consuming the same amount that you're burning over an extended period of time.

Whether you have body composition goals or not, the thing that matters is that you feel good about your choice! The desire to change your body or to not change it is neither good nor bad. It's about approaching whatever you want to do from a healthy place that feels right to you.

If you do have body composition goals, you are likely saying to yourself after reading all of this, "Okay cool, but how do I find out how many calories I'm supposed to be consuming to gain/lose/maintain my weight?" The truth is, there is no perfect or exact formula! We are going to go through a SUPER SIMPLE one though, that works really well and makes things really easy to understand.

First, we need to calculate your maintenance calories.

Let's say for example that you are currently 160lbs. We take 160 and multiply it by 12:
 $160 \times 12 = 1,920$

That means if you eat 1,920 calories on average per day, you are going to maintain your weight and not be in a caloric surplus or a deficit.

Let's calculate your deficit calories.

Pretend you want to lose 10lbs. We are going to take the weight that you want to work toward, and use the same formula: $150 \times 12 = 1,800$

That means eating 1,800 calories would put you in a caloric deficit, and if you consumed this amount consistently over an extended period of time, you would be able to slowly and steadily work toward your weight loss goal.

Calculating calories for weight loss, weight gain, and weight maintenance.

Let's calculate your surplus calories.

Pretend you want to gain 10lbs. We are going to take the weight that you want to work toward, and use the same formula: $170 \times 12 = 2,040$

That means eating 2,040 calories would then put you in a caloric surplus, and if you consumed this amount consistently over an extended period of time, you would be able to slowly and steadily work toward your weight gain goal.

NOTE: Setting a goal weight to base your caloric intake off of doesn't actually need to be about reaching that number! Maybe you're not someone who likes to use the scale at all. Well, you can just as easily set your caloric intake and then go by how you feel or how your clothes fit instead of the number on the scale!

You also might not necessarily get to that goal. Maybe you set a goal weight of 150lbs, but you get to 155lbs and feel the best you ever have! It's really not about "getting to a certain weight" but instead, using that number to help understand how much you want to eat to feel your best.

I hope this is all making sense! Before we go any further, I want to talk about a few factors that can absolutely affect these formulas:

You need to keep in mind that we are all unique snowflakes. You might be someone with an extraordinarily fast metabolism, and this generic calculation might be completely wrong for you. If you are a 125lb woman who is able to maintain your weight while eating 2,500 calories per day, cool! That doesn't mean you are exempt from the calorie in vs. calorie out rule, you use energy just like everyone else.

The difference is that your caloric output happens to be higher than most. It could mean that you are an athlete, training super hard and in need of extra calories to recover. It could also mean that genetically, you burn more calories at rest than the average person your size, and therefore you need more calories to properly fuel you!

This formula is amazing because it really makes things simple (and it works, believe me) but I just want to make sure you know that there are other unique factors that can come into play.

Calculating protein

As you know from being in the gang, I always recommend hitting minimum of 100g of protein each day. Is that necessarily the perfect amount? Nope, but it does cover the bases. Protein matters. I don't care what any fear mongering fake research out there says that is trying to make you afraid of getting "bulky".

Sufficient daily protein is essential because protein is the only macronutrient that helps with muscle growth and maintenance. As a woman especially, growing and even holding on to muscle is HARD - even more so if you're in a caloric deficit! Ensuring you are eating enough protein is going to help you prevent muscle loss, which is extremely common while in a caloric deficit. It will also help you slowly and steadily grow your lean tissue as you work toward your fitness performance and body composition goals. Just as importantly, protein is the most filling macronutrient!

General Rule:

Good protein intake = 100g

Ideal = 1g / lb of goal bodyweight

For example if you are working toward being 150lbs (whether that be less, more, or the same as your current weight), then in an ideal world you would consume 150g of protein each day.

Calculating macros

What do fitness people even mean when they say “calculating my macros” anyways? We’re going to unpack it now. It means that they take their caloric intake goal (whether it be in a surplus, deficit, or at maintenance) and they come up with an “ideal” amount of protein, carbs, and fat that helps them reach that number.

Let’s go back to our earlier example! We have someone with a target weight of 150lbs. That means their daily caloric intake will be 1,800 as we calculated before. Well, if their target weight is 150lbs, that means their target protein intake is 150g / day.

Once again, 1 gram of protein = 4 calories. Which means 150g of protein x 4 cal / gram = 600 calories of protein each day.

1,800 calories - 600 calories of protein = 1,200 calories left made up of some combination of fat and carbohydrates.

Now, exactly what combination is up to you! There are TONS of free macro trackers online that can estimate how many grams of each (and therefore calories of each) that it’s “ideal” for you to be consuming, but to be honest, it really doesn't make all that much of a difference. At the end of the day, you want to be eating a balanced diet that includes ALL the macronutrients each day (aka making sure you're getting protein, carbs, and fats each day). You also want to eat in a deficit, surplus, or at maintenance depending on your goals, and you want to have a minimum of 100g of protein each day.

While it used to be extremely popular for people to track every gram of protein, carbs, and fats, it really doesn't matter all that much. Popularized by Jordan Syatt and other nutrition experts over the past few years, a newer and just as effective method of working toward a body composition goal focuses on tracking ONLY calories and protein, as opposed to worrying about exactly how many grams of each macronutrient you are getting in. It saves time, energy, and really focuses on what matters if you have weight gain or weight loss goals.

An important explanation

Now, here's the thing. You might do your calculation and say to yourself "omg, there is no way I could eat that many calories!" (something I've had clients say to me more times than I can possibly count. But the truth is, you have no idea how many calories you take in if you aren't tracking them. The even bigger and harder truth is, the majority of people that tell me they "couldn't even imagine eating that many calories etc. etc." are typically dramatically under eating Monday to Friday and severely binging every weekend.

I need you guys to remember that your body doesn't recognize a single-day in isolation! "Days" are socially constructed concepts that our bodies aren't able to recognize. That's why whether you're trying to gain/lose/maintain your weight, you need to remember that it's about what you do consistently over an extended period of time that matters.

For example, let's say there was a woman who wanted to lose 15lbs. She currently weighted 160lbs and wanted to get to somewhere around 145lbs. If we did her calculations, then her maintenance would be about 1,920 calories, and her deficit calories would be about 1,740 calories. Let's say she claims she is hitting her deficit calories (and eating wayyyy less than them) but "can't lose weight". When what she's really doing is this:

Monday - Thursday

Borderline starving herself to try and lose weight. Cuts back on food, doesn't allow herself to feel full, and knows she isn't getting enough energy to function properly. Let's say she's getting 1,000 calories / day.

Friday - Sunday

She can't restrict anymore. She's hungry, exhausted, and emotionally and physically drained. She drinks all weekend, binges hard on restaurant food, and eats way way past the point of being full.

An important explanation

Let's say she's getting 4,000 calories / day (it sounds really high, but I promise you it's not hard to do when you're in binge/restrict mode).

If she had averaged at her deficit all week, this would be her weekly caloric intake:
 $1,740 \times 7 \text{ days} = 12,180 \text{ calories in a week}$

If she restricted all week and binged all weekend, this would be her weekly calories intake:

$$1,000 \times 4 = 4,000$$

$$4,000 \times 3 = 12,000$$

$$= 16,000 \text{ calories in a week.}$$

The reason I wanted to go through that example, is because it's something that happens all the time! While like I said earlier, we're just talking nutrition and not mental health for right now, even just the physical toll that the pattern of restricting and binging can be so detrimental! This example also explains really well why it's not about what you do each day, but over an extended period of time.

What if you're like me (and like most people in the world) and you want to treat yourself more on the weekends then you do during the week? I personally love wine on the weekend, and you know I'll be getting some pizza or ice cream most weekends! It's easy. You take your daily caloric goal, and you account for wanting more on weekends! Here's a super simple example:

An important explanation

Let's say I wanted to maintain my weight, so I was eating at maintenance. Let's keep it simple and pretend that my maintenance calories worked out to about 1,700 / day. Well, I would subtract slightly from my weekday calories and add them in to my weekend calories! Remember, your body can't differentiate each day, it's just about what you do over an extended period of time.

So rather than eating 1,700 calories each day Monday to Friday, I am going to subtract 100 calories from Monday - Friday. That gives me 500 extra calories (250/day) to add in to Saturday and Sunday.

My week now looks like:

M - F = 1,600 calories / day (approximately)

S + S = 1,950 calories / day (approximately)

This works out to 11,900 in a week, which is the exact same weekly amount I would get if I instead consumed approximately 1,700 x all 7 days! Make sense?

Tracking

I really need to stress this again, because I am worried that someone is going to get the wrong idea: **YOU DO NOT NEED TO TRACK YOUR CALORIES!** In fact, there are ways you can still work toward a body composition goal without tracking at all, and I am going to get into them later.

The reason I'm breaking down tracking for you, is because it is going to give you a scientific strategy to guarantee you are able to reach your goals through our energy in vs. Energy out formula. Tracking calories is a hugely popular strategy, because it's really the only surefire way to know if in fact you are in a caloric surplus, deficit, or at maintenance.

My thoughts on tracking

I have learned a lot from it! I'm not someone who tracks my calories all the time (god that would be horrible...not to mention I don't want to be thinking about calories all the time). However, I track my calories and my protein a few times a year. I'll do it if I have a body composition goal, if I am just curious how much I'm consuming at a given period of time, or if I want to use it as a push to start eating more whole foods and less junk! One of my favourite take-aways has been learning the skill of estimation. I can pretty much look at any protein source and be able to estimate closely how many g of protein are in it! I also love being able to easily estimate approximately how many calories I'm consuming in a given day, since I've tracked most foods before and have a pretty good sense of what's in them.

I like to think of tracking as a tool in your tool box. It might be one that you want to try out, and it might not be one for you at all!

Here are times when I would NOT recommend tracking calories or macros:

- During the holidays (ESPECIALLY not at family meals, parties, or social events when you should be focused on quality time with the people you love, and not on how many grams of protein is in your turkey pot pie).
- If you are struggling with body dysmorphia, an eating disorder of any kind, or are in recovery. Please please please get the professional help you need to feel good and live the life you deserve to live!
- If you have any kind of fear that tracking calories might trigger any form of obsessive or unhealthy tendencies.
- If you find tracking annoying, tedious, or if you don't have any desire to do it.

How to track

MyFitness Pal tends to be the most popular and easiest free app to use! Clear the settings and plug in your own calorie and protein goals after you've calculated them outside of the app.

Don't even get me started on how disgusting it is that MyFitnessPal automatically tells EVERY WOMAN to eat 1,200 calories without basing it on any information. That is diet culture bullshit in a nutshell and is so wrong. Please don't let something like this confuse you into how much you should be eating.

If/when you start tracking, don't obsess! It's not about being perfect (at this or at anything in life). I have never actually hit my calorie intake goal to the exact calorie. It's about using it as a tool to guide you, not obsess over.

Try to learn from the experience and see if it's something you like. You might find you learn a lot about which foods are made up of which macronutrients, and how to estimate your daily protein and caloric goals without the app altogether. It can be a great learning experience if it's approached in the right way.

Working toward body composition goals without tracking

You can absolutely work toward a body composition goal of gaining or losing weight without tracking, it's just going to take following some general guidelines!

- Look for whole, minimally processed nutrient-dense foods for the majority of what you eat.
- Know your major protein source in each meal.
- Get a fat and carb source in each meal
- Eat tons of veggies

The food included in your game plan does all of this, works out to approximately 1,650 - 1,850 calories each day, and does a great job of hitting your goal of over 100g of protein! Now, because of you being a unique butterfly we don't yet know if this is going to be the right amount of calories that helps you work toward your goals. It's just going to be a place for you to start.

For the first week of the Winter Series, follow the Game Plan with the same quantities of food listed. Have your 3 meals and 2 snacks each day, and include a treat meal into your week! I want you to assess how you feel each day and at the end of your first week. Did you feel too hungry? Were you bloated and uncomfortably full? What were your energy levels like? Are you feeling leaner and tighter after one week?

After one week it may be time for you to make slight adjustments! If you were constantly hungry, listen to your body and up your portion sizes! If you feel lethargic, heavy, and way past full, you may need to slightly reduce portion sizes.

I hope you found this tool helpful, and I can't wait to hear what you think! I will be doing an in depth video on this topic during the Winter Series.

Love you!