

THE BALANCED BODY LIFESTYLE

THE PROTEIN GUIDE

Simple strategies for eating enough protein every day.

A practical, everyday protein system

Built for adults focused on strength, healthy aging, body composition, recovery, and maintaining muscle - without turning nutrition into a daily math problem.

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Why Protein Matters

Protein is the nutrient your body uses to build and repair tissue. It supplies the amino acids involved in muscle maintenance, recovery from training, enzyme and hormone production, immune function, and the everyday upkeep of skin, bone, and connective tissue.

For adults focused on strength and healthy aging, protein does four things especially well:

- **Maintains and builds muscle.** Paired with resistance training, adequate protein gives the body the raw material it needs to repair and adapt.
- **Supports recovery.** Training creates the stimulus; nutrition supplies the building blocks that let you come back stronger.
- **Helps preserve lean tissue during weight loss.** When calories drop, protein plus strength work helps protect the muscle you already have.
- **Improves satiety.** Protein-rich meals tend to be more filling, which can make consistent eating easier.

THE BIG PICTURE

Protein is not only about building bigger muscles. It is about keeping the strength, mobility, and physical capability that make daily life easier for decades to come.

Protein Is Part of a System

Protein works best alongside resistance training, sufficient overall calories, quality carbohydrates and fats, hydration, and sleep. No single nutrient carries a healthy lifestyle by itself.

How Much Protein Do You Need?

There is no single protein number that is right for everyone. Needs vary based on body size, age, activity level, training, total calorie intake, health status, and goals. The ranges below are widely used general educational reference points, not prescriptions for any individual.

General reference range	Approximate daily protein
Basic adult reference (RDA)	about 0.8 g per kg per day
Many healthy older adults	about 1.0 - 1.2 g per kg per day
Regularly active adults	about 1.2 - 1.6 g per kg per day
Strength training or fat loss with muscle retention as a goal	often toward the higher end of that range

A Simpler Way to Estimate

If grams per kilogram feels abstract, many people find it easier to think in servings: a meaningful protein source at each main meal, plus a protein-containing snack or two, will move most people into a reasonable range without tracking every gram.

- Divide your body weight in pounds by 2.2 to get kilograms, then multiply by your target range.
- Round to a practical daily number you can actually hit most days.
- Reassess if your training, weight, appetite, or health status changes.

KEEP IT HONEST

Higher protein is not automatically better. Past a certain point, more protein simply becomes more food and more calories. Aim for adequate and consistent rather than maximal.

Protein at Every Meal

Many people eat very little protein early in the day and then try to make up the difference at dinner. Spreading protein across meals is usually more practical, more comfortable, and easier to repeat.

Meal	Protein target
Breakfast	a solid serving to start the day
Lunch	a solid serving
Dinner	a solid serving
Snack or post-workout	a smaller top-up as needed

Why Spreading It Out Helps

- Meals feel more satisfying, which supports appetite control through the day.
- You are less dependent on one enormous evening meal to reach your total.
- It fits real schedules: work, travel, training, and family meals.
- It builds a repeatable habit rather than a nightly catch-up effort.

PRACTICAL RULE

Build the plate around the protein first, then add vegetables, fruit, fiber-rich carbohydrates, and healthy fats around it.

High-Quality Protein Sources

Most of your protein should come from foods that also deliver other useful nutrients. Both animal and plant foods can contribute meaningful protein - variety makes it easier.

Poultry & Eggs • Chicken breast or thighs • Lean ground turkey or chicken • Turkey breast • Whole eggs and egg whites • Rotisserie chicken	Fish & Seafood • Salmon • Tuna, fresh or in pouches • Shrimp and white fish • Sardines • Frozen seafood portions
Dairy & High-Protein Options • Greek yogurt • Cottage cheese • Skyr • Milk or lactose-free milk • Part-skim cheese in sensible portions	Plant-Based Protein • Beans and lentils • Chickpeas and edamame • Tofu and tempeh • Higher-protein grains such as quinoa • Nuts, seeds, and nut butters
Lean Meats • Lean beef cuts such as sirloin • Lean ground beef • Pork tenderloin • Bison • Venison	Convenience Proteins • Quality whey or plant protein powder • Ready-to-drink protein shakes • Tuna or salmon pouches • Hard-boiled eggs • Roasted edamame or chickpeas

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Favor mostly minimally processed sources, compare added sugar in flavored yogurts and shakes, use highly processed meats less often, and keep at least one shelf-stable or frozen protein on hand for nights when plans change.

Quick Protein Reference Guide

Approximate protein per common serving. Values are rounded estimates for planning purposes and will vary by brand, cut, and preparation.

Food and serving	Approximate protein
Chicken breast, cooked - 4 oz	about 30 g
Lean ground turkey, cooked - 4 oz	about 28 g
Lean beef sirloin, cooked - 4 oz	about 30 g
Pork tenderloin, cooked - 4 oz	about 28 g
Salmon, cooked - 4 oz	about 25 g
Shrimp, cooked - 4 oz	about 24 g
Tuna pouch - 1 pouch (2.6 oz)	about 17 g
Large egg - 1	about 6 g
Egg whites - 1/2 cup	about 13 g
Greek yogurt, plain nonfat - 1 cup	about 20 g
Cottage cheese, low-fat - 1 cup	about 24 g
Milk - 1 cup	about 8 g
Whey protein powder - 1 scoop	about 20 - 25 g
Plant protein powder - 1 scoop	about 20 g
Lentils, cooked - 1 cup	about 18 g
Black beans, cooked - 1 cup	about 15 g
Chickpeas, cooked - 1 cup	about 15 g
Edamame, shelled - 1 cup	about 18 g
Tofu, firm - 4 oz	about 10 g
Tempeh - 3 oz	about 16 g
Quinoa, cooked - 1 cup	about 8 g
Peanut butter - 2 tbsp	about 7 g
Almonds - 1 oz	about 6 g

Simple Ways to Increase Daily Protein

Small, repeatable upgrades are usually more effective than a complete diet overhaul.

Breakfast • Add eggs or egg whites • Swap regular yogurt for Greek yogurt • Stir protein powder into oatmeal • Add cottage cheese on the side • Blend a simple protein smoothie	Lunch • Add grilled chicken or salmon to a salad • Use a tuna or salmon pouch • Add beans or lentils to soup • Choose a higher-protein wrap or bowl • Keep pre-cooked protein in the fridge
Dinner • Cook a larger protein portion and save leftovers • Add edamame or beans to the plate • Use tofu or tempeh in stir-fries • Batch-cook two proteins on the weekend • Keep frozen shrimp or fish for fast meals	Snacks & Post-Workout • Greek yogurt with berries • Cottage cheese with fruit • Hard-boiled eggs • A protein shake when a meal is far off • String cheese, jerky, or roasted edamame

QUICK WIN

Choose one meal that is usually low in protein - for most people it is breakfast - and upgrade only that meal for two weeks. That single change often moves the daily total more than any tracking app.

Protein and Healthy Aging

Muscle is not just about appearance. It supports balance, bone health, metabolism, blood sugar management, injury resilience, and the ability to carry groceries, climb stairs, travel, and play with grandchildren.

Aging is associated with changes in muscle mass, strength, appetite, activity level, and the body's response to dietary protein. That combination is why many older adults benefit from paying closer attention to protein than they did at 30.

The Two-Part Strategy

- **Resistance training** provides the signal that tells the body to keep and build muscle.
- **Adequate protein** supplies the material the body uses to answer that signal.
- Neither works nearly as well without the other.

WHY IT MATTERS

The goal is not to eat enormous quantities of food. The goal is to give the body enough support to keep the strength and independence you have worked to build.

Protein During Weight Loss

When body weight decreases, the aim should not be simply a smaller number on the scale. Adequate protein combined with resistance training helps more of that loss come from excess body fat while preserving lean tissue. The quality of the weight loss matters.

Protein Supplements

Protein powders are food in a convenient form. They are useful when schedule, appetite, or travel makes whole-food protein difficult - and unnecessary when your meals already get you where you want to be.

Type	What to know
Whey	Fast-digesting dairy protein; complete amino acid profile; common after training
Whey isolate	Further filtered; lower in lactose, which some people tolerate better
Casein	Slower-digesting dairy protein; often used in the evening or in thicker recipes
Plant-based blends	Pea, rice, soy, or blends; choose blends for a more complete amino profile
Collagen	Useful for some purposes, but not a complete muscle-building protein on its own

Choosing a Product

- Look for a short, understandable ingredient list.
- Compare protein per serving against added sugar and total calories.
- Third-party testing certifications can add confidence in product quality.
- Choose a flavor and texture you will actually use.

THE RULE

Supplements supplement. They should complement a balanced eating pattern, not replace the whole foods that also deliver fiber, vitamins, minerals, and satisfaction.

A Sample High-Protein Day

This is one realistic example of how protein can be distributed - not a prescribed diet plan. Adjust portions, timing, and foods to your own preferences, culture, budget, appetite, and goals.

Meal	Approximate protein
Breakfast 3 eggs, 1 slice whole-grain toast, and 1/2 cup berries	about 22 g
Mid-morning 1 cup plain Greek yogurt with fruit	about 20 g
Lunch Large salad with 4 oz grilled chicken, olive oil, and quinoa	about 34 g
Afternoon snack Protein shake or cottage cheese with fruit	about 22 g
Dinner 4 oz salmon, roasted vegetables, and a sweet potato	about 27 g
Evening, optional Small bowl of cottage cheese or a handful of almonds	about 8 - 12 g
Approximate daily total	about 135 - 140 g

MAKE IT YOURS

A plant-based version of this same day could use tofu scramble, lentil soup, tempeh, edamame, and a plant protein blend. The structure matters more than the specific foods.

The Balanced Body Lifestyle Takeaway

Protein is essential, but the right amount is individual. Your age, size, activity level, training, calorie intake, health status, and goals all shape what makes sense for you.

You do not need perfect nutrition. You need intentional nutrition, repeated often enough to matter.

- Include a meaningful protein source at each main meal.
- Let food come first and use supplements for convenience.
- Pair protein with consistent resistance training.
- Support it all with hydration, recovery, and sleep.
- Judge progress over months, not days.

REMEMBER

Consistency beats perfection. Protein works best as one part of a balanced lifestyle - nutrition, resistance training, recovery, hydration, and sleep working together.

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EDUCATIONAL DISCLAIMER

This guide is provided by The Balanced Body Lifestyle for general educational purposes only and is not individualized medical or nutritional advice. Protein needs vary considerably between individuals. Anyone with kidney disease, other medical conditions, specific dietary restrictions, or questions about an appropriate protein intake should discuss their needs with a qualified healthcare professional or registered dietitian.