



# **HIGH TENSILE STRENGTH**

NEITHER BENT NOR BROKEN  
NUTRITION GUIDE



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## About Me

I knew that I wanted to study nutrition since I was 17.

Over the past 20 years, professional and personal experiences as a registered dietitian have continued to shape and deepen my interest in nutrition. I have worked as a dietitian in a psychiatric hospital, food service management, food industry, private practice and now in the area of nutrition and communications. I have also facilitated classes for over 4 000 people with extreme obesity.

Another area of interest is public speaking and media relations, since there is so much misinformation about nutrition. This motivated me to obtain a diploma in public relations at MacEwan University and gave me have a better understanding of communications. I have done over 100 television interviews and also contribute to various print publications. Throughout my career, I love to promote mutual understanding and communicate evidence-based nutrition information and aim to do so in an empathic and non-judgmental way.

I completed my undergraduate degree and training in nutrition and dietetics at the University of Alberta and with the University of Alberta Coordinated Dietetic Internship Program. Other certifications and memberships I hold include; a certificate in adult weight management (from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics), a Precision Nutrition Level 1 certification as well as memberships with College of Dietitians of Alberta, Dietitians of Canada, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Weight Management and Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutrition dietetic practice groups) and the Canadian Obesity Network. In 2012, I attended *The Revolutionary Practice of Mind Body Medicine* 5-day course offered by Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine/Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA.

In my spare time I love to travel (and I also love coming home to Edmonton, Alberta Canada), volunteer in my community and spend time with family and friends. My favourite time to work out is 6 AM.

I've always been an active person (completed a few marathons, regular gym-class attendee), but have never considered myself particularly athletic. I'd be remiss, if I didn't give a heartfelt thank-you to a great friend, (also an athlete and exercise physiologist) who helped me to overcome my (irrational) intimidation of the weight area of the gym over 3 years ago. She helped show me the ropes (I mean TRX and the cable machine..haha), the difference between barbells and dumbbells, the squat racks and free weights. Weightlifting is never something I thought I would enjoy so much. Thanks Sandra Pelchat!

Thanks too to Dean Somerset for having been my trainer, the opportunity to be a beta tester for the *High Tensile Strength* program and for the opportunity to write this guide.

Wishing you all success in the transformations that good nutrition and fitness can bring.

Sincerely,  
Karol Sekulic RD PN1

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# Introduction

Welcome to the *High Tensile Strength Neither Bent Nor Broken Nutrition Guide*. The premise of this guide is: Simple but not easy – a staged approach to the best diet ever.

## **What is the best diet ever?**

The best diet ever is simple. The best diet is a pattern of eating that you can sustain, find satisfying not for a week, nor 12 weeks, but for life. It is also one that that helps you get healthier, stay strong, reduce body fat, build muscle mass, and reduce or delay the onset of disease. Is that possible? Yes! Can you do it? Of course! But it is not always easy. That's why this nutrition guide is written in stages.

Most people who want to lose weight or build muscle mass typically want to keep a physique and/or health benefits for life and not for a short time.

Most people cannot out-exercise unhealthy food choices. Diet (what you eat and drink) has a major influence on body composition. Diet and exercise work together to change composition.

When you review diets: higher carbohydrate, lower carbohydrate or commercial weight loss programs for example—they all “work”, it's a matter of how long you can stick to it. Higher protein diets typically “work” better in the short term, likely because the protein and fat amounts help people to feel more satisfied. The ability to keep weight off or to maintain muscle mass is related to how long you can maintain dietary changes. Being able to maintain dietary changes also depends on a healthy mindset.

To do this in the long term, a change of lifestyle must occur; therefore this nutrition guide suggests a staged approach. You move through the stages at your own pace. When you are ready, and when you feel you can maintain the changes from one stage, you move to the next stage. It is suggested that you take 1-2 months per stage to get comfortable with nutrition and lifestyle changes. This should take you through the duration of the *High Tensile Strength* training program.

## **Nutrition Guide outline:**

### Getting Started

- Awareness of how your some lifestyle habits affect your health and nutrition

- Personal mission statement

- Two Self Tests:

  - Self Test 1 - Time Study: How you spend your time

  - Self Test 2 - Lifestyle Checklist: Determines which stage to start at

Stage 1: Steps toward a foundation of a lifetime of healthier choices

Stage 2: Fine tuning your food and drink choices

Stage 3: Macronutrient targets

Appendix 1: Food Lists

Appendix 2: Sample Meal Plans

## Getting Started

Understanding and being aware of your environment will also help you to know that managing stress and having a personal mission statement are major parts of having the best diet ever. These are critical parts to building lasting lifestyle change.

### Environment

#### **Understand your environment and what helps or holds us back from healthy behaviours**

The environment in developed countries is not conducive to healthy eating or a healthy body composition. Think about your day today when you answer these questions:

- How many food advertisements have you seen?
- How many pre-packaged foods do you have at your home or work that don't look like food your great great grandmother would recognize (for example: coffee creamer, crackers, bottled salad dressing, any packaged snack food or cookie, muffins, breakfast cereal)?
- Did you walk to work, your friends' or families' place, or to the store?
- Did you go out for drinks this week? Out for a meal? (fast food, restaurant or take-out?)
- Did someone at work bring food, was there a potluck, are there vending machines where you work or volunteer?
- Did you spend time today with people (friends, family and/or coworkers) that don't have the healthiest of habits?
- Were you asked to buy or sell unhealthy food for a fundraiser (cookies, frozen cookie dough, chocolate)?

The above reasons are just a few examples of the influences that impact our food decisions. The environment we live in affects our food choices, regardless of how much we know about nutrition.

## Managing stress

We need stress in our lives to spur us to take action and complete tasks. But managing stress is a major factor in overall health and nutritional health. Stress often derails us from healthy behaviours.

If you think of any time in your life that was really stressful, think about your eating habits, sleep patterns, activity or thought processes that changed because of stress. Managing stress builds resilience, so when you have a bad day, you don't think, "I need a treat" as an answer or a solution to a stressful situation.

An active relaxation practice also helps to manage stress and build resilience. Examples of active relaxation practices include:

- deep breathing
- regular meditation
- spending 20 minutes a day with no distractions
- yoga
- prayer
- gardening
- mindfulness in daily life \*

An active relaxation practice is a practice that engages your mind. Lying on the couch and watching an entertaining movie or documentary is a passive activity. Activities that allow you to be alone with your thoughts are difficult for many people, since negative thoughts, memories or emotions can come up. Reflective thinking can help you be aware of your thought patterns. Once aware, insights into what helps or holds you back from healthy behaviours can occur. It can also help identify triggers to healthy or unhealthy behaviours. Stress promotes disease; conversely relaxation promotes health.

\*For more information on the research and health benefits of mindfulness, there are YouTube videos and publications available by these individuals

**Ellen Langer**, Professor of Psychology Harvard University

**John Kabat Zinn**, Professor of Medicine Emeritus and creator of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School



### A word about gratitude journals:

When you start paying attention to your thoughts and if you realize you have more negative than positive thoughts, try to keep a gratitude journal. Writing in your gratitude journal daily can help change your mindset to a more positive one. To do so, write 3–5 things you are grateful for every day. You can also download a gratitude journal app for your Smartphone if you prefer to record gratitude electronically

## **Sleep**

### **Get 7–9 hours of sleep per night.**

Sleep is restorative. It is the time your body needs for rest and repair. If attempting to lose weight with less sleep, the weight loss comes from lean mass instead of fat.

Having less sleep:

- is associated with more body fat
- can impact your ability to think clearly and may impact mood
- affects your body's ability to process carbohydrates.



### Personal mission statement:

This is an important statement that helps to guide you through your life to get you closer to what you want. It is like a message to yourself reminding yourself what your goals are, what you want to be, and what is important to you.

To have a personal mission statement you have to articulate what you want for yourself in all aspects of your life (socially, physically and emotionally). Your body listens to what your mind tells it. **Write it down.** This will help remind you and will help guide your decisions. You can state what you want your predominant mood to be, who you want to put as a priority in your life (yourself, your family, your partner), how you want to feel.



### Considerations for your personal mission statement:

Describe why you want to make changes:

*Example: I want to challenge myself, I want to prove to myself I can consider myself a weightlifter.*

Describe what you want to achieve:

*Example: I will make my workouts, nutrition habits, meditation, spiritual practice or positive self-talk a priority.*

Describe how you want to feel:

*Examples include: happy, joyful, grateful, serene, hopeful, proud, enthusiastic, sparkly.*

Describe why health is important:

*Example: I want to feel energetic for my work and for my kids.*

Develop – provide guidelines, describe what you look like, where you assign your time and values:

*Example: My habits are sustainable/ lifelong. I identify with healthy eating and am healthy person. I inspire and help people, I am kind.*

Look at your mission statement daily. Post it somewhere visible, write a note and keep it in your wallet. Set it as a daily reminder on your computer or Smartphone.



## Self Tests:

### Self Test 1: Time Study

How you spend your time tells you what you value. Many people find time study results surprising. It can help to identify ways to save time in your day, since adding workouts and changing eating habits take time.

**Instructions:** Take two days of the week. Use one weekend day and one weekday. Write down on a paper or on your Smart phone, how you spend time in your entire day.

#### Time Study: Weekday example: Monday

Time of day	Activity (sleep, shower, TV, shopping, work, eating, buying food etc)
7:00 A.M. – 8:15 A.M.	Checked emails and social media accounts
8:15 A.M. – 8:45 A.M.	Stopped at drive-thru to get coffee and then drove to work

#### Time Study: Weekend example: Saturday

Time of day	Activity (sleep, shower, TV, shopping, work, eating, buying food etc)
10:00 A.M.–12:15 A.M	Looked for great car deals online

Note activities that take a lot of time that would not contribute to your goals like eating out, checking emails, social media, surfing the internet, watching television, playing video games. This is where you can ‘find time’ to add a workout or go grocery shopping for healthy food.

## Self Test 2: Lifestyle Checklist

### Directions:

1. Check ☒ Yes or No to each question. There is a 2 page list of questions.
2. Add your number of Yes and No responses and place in the Totals section on the next page.

<b>Mental and emotional health</b>	Yes	No
Are you aware of your feelings and can you articulate them?		
Are you assertive?		
Do you <b>avoid</b> using food or drinks to cope with your emotions?		
Can you say “no thank you” if you start to get pressured to eat what is being served at family, work, or other special occasions?		
Do you <b>avoid</b> spending time with people who drink alcohol, smoke or eat unhealthy food regularly?		
Do you have people in your life that are supportive of your health?		
<b>Your environment</b>		
Do you avoid buying snack foods like potato chips, chocolate, crackers (not whole grain kind), or candy at work or at home?		
Do you do the grocery shopping for your household?		
Do you have containers to carry food in (for example, Tupperware®, Rubbermaid® containers, plastic bags)?		
If your workplace has food treats (candy bowl, vending machine with unhealthy food ) do you mainly avoid these foods?		
Does your job make it easy to bring food from home (for example, you have a refrigerator or microwave at work, you have a place to store food, most people at work bring food from home)?		
<b>Vegetables and Fruit</b>		
Do you eat vegetables daily?		
Do you have vegetables in your refrigerator?		
Is 50% or more of the contents of your refrigerator vegetables?		
Do you eat more vegetables than fruit?		
Do you eat fruit daily? How many pieces of fruit? _____		
<b>Grains</b>		
Do you eat whole grains more than 90% of the time (examples: oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, amaranth, teff)?		
Do you avoid white bread, white pasta, rice?		
<b>Meals</b>		
Do you eat 3 meals per day?		
Do you cook for yourself?		
Do you cook mainly ‘from scratch’ (make your own salad dressing, pasta sauce, lasagna, season your own meat, make your own vegetarian or meat stews)?		
Do you eat your meals at home?		
Do you think the food you eat would be recognizable by your great great grandmother (For example, she would recognize oatmeal, but not most other breakfast cereals)?		
Do you take at least 20 minutes to eat your meal?		

<b>Foods with added sugar</b> (If No, list how many times per week you eat them)		
Do you <b>avoid</b> sugar-sweetened pop? (if No, # times/ week ____)		
Do you <b>avoid</b> cookies, cake, pie, granola bars? (if No, # times/ week ____)		
Do you <b>avoid</b> ice cream, sherbet, frozen yogurt? (if No, # times/ week ____)		
Do you <b>avoid</b> breakfast cereal with added sugar? (if No, # times/ week ____)		
Do you <b>avoid</b> pre-made salad dressings and sauces with added sugar (relish, barbeque)?		
<b>Eating out</b>		
Do you limit how many times you eat: fast food, take-out or in a restaurant to less than twice per week?		
When you eat out, do vegetables fill half your plate?		
Do you avoid high fat foods when eating out? chicken wings, fries, potato chips, calamari, poutine, spring rolls, fried dough, natchos, fried fish, pizzas?		
Do you avoid purchasing sandwiches/subs?		
When on vacation, do you make healthy food choices?		
<b>Beverages</b>		
Do you avoid fruit juice?		
Do you avoid tea or coffee drinks with added syrups, flavourings and cream?		
Do you avoid pop sweetened with sugar?		
Do you avoid smoothies or bubble tea?		
Do you drink 9–12 cups (250 mL is one cup) of fluid per day?		
<b>Sleep habits</b>		
Do you sleep 7–9 hours each night?		
Do you <b>avoid</b> caffeinated drinks (coffee, black tea, energy drinks) a few hours before you go to bed?		
Do you have black-out blinds (blinds that block all light from outside lighting i.e. street lamps)?		
Do you <b>avoid</b> watching or reading the news before going to sleep?		
Do you ensure that your room is completely dark when you go to sleep (for example, no light is coming from phone, computer, or alarm clock)		
Do you <b>avoid</b> eating a large meal or snack (more than 500 calories) before going to sleep?		
<b>TOTAL*</b>		

\* If you answered “No” to 38 or more of the questions, start with Stage 1.  
 If you answered “Yes” to 38 or more of the questions start with Stage 2.

## Stage 1: Steps toward a foundation of a lifetime of healthier choices

Welcome to Stage 1! This stage will likely take the longest. Be patient with yourself. Changing eating habits is not as simple as some people make it sound. It typically involves time and some shifting priorities. That's one of the reasons reviewing your time study and writing a personal mission statement is helpful, since changing health behaviours almost always involves changing a mindset.

### **Write your personal mission statement and review it every day.**

See mission statement section on page 5.

Share your mission statement with others who support you or who you feel comfortable with. Talk to your friends or family and ask them to support your personal health mission (not in a policing type of way, but an encouraging one). Maybe ask them to join you.

### **Use the results of Self Test 2 to start to make changes.**

- Take 1–2 questions you answered No to and change them to a Yes.
- When you feel like those changes become a habit, take another 1–2 questions and make 2 more dietary changes, until you are finished your list.

Note about **Mental and Emotional Health** answers from the Self-Test 2. A healthy mindset helps you to have healthy lifestyle behaviours. For example, Olympic athletes and other sports teams often have a sports psychologist to assist with visualization and overcoming psychological barriers to performance. Making changes to your mindset or your emotional responses can be difficult without additional support. Addressing these issues is beyond the scope of the nutrition guide. An important first step to any change is being aware of any barriers you have.

If you think you may want additional help with mental and emotional health here are some suggestions to start:

- Ask your family doctor for some suggestions
- Check if your work benefit plans has a employee assistance programs that has counseling services
- Speak with a member or leader in your faith or cultural community.

Below are some reasons to make changes, as well as some suggested ways to make dietary changes.

### **Grocery shopping**

Grocery shopping is simple, but the selection can be overwhelming. There are tens of thousands of food products in the grocery store. Many of them have health and nutrition claims on them. To get started having healthier foods at home:

- Put foods in your cart or basket with the least amount of processing. The checklist on the next page will help to tell you if the food has been processed a lot.
- Buy frozen or fresh vegetables and fruit.



## Checklist to tell if your food has been processed a lot

Directions:

1. Check ☒ Yes or No to each question.
2. If you answer, “Yes” to most of the questions below, your food has probably been processed a lot.

Food from the grocery store	Yes	No
Would most foods that you put in your cart NOT be recognizable to your great great grandmother?		
Does the food package have a nutrient claim or nutrition selling feature “has added protein, high source of fibre”? (Most healthy foods don’t need health claims. Often nutrient or health claims are used to sell foods that are processed.)		
Do you have to tear through more than one layer of paper/packaging to get to the food?		
Do you remember seeing a food advertisement for the food? (Note: Most unprocessed foods are not advertised. For example: Can you recall seeing a commercial for cauliflower?)		
Does the food product have more than one ingredient on the ingredient list?		

Examples of food with the least amount of processing:

Fresh or frozen vegetables and fruit	Whole grains: oats, barley, quinoa, amaranth
Fresh or frozen meat (that is not pre-seasoned or breaded)	Oils: sunflower, olive, canola
Canned beans and lentils (without added salt, sugar or seasonings)	Nuts without added salt, oil or sugar
Fish (that is not pre-seasoned or breaded)	Bagged beans and lentils

## Enjoy your food and eat slowly

- Enjoy your food—this can be a mindful activity.
- Eat as slowly as possible.
- Try to eat without distractions (computer, Smartphone, TV).
- If you are looking to decrease calories, research shows that people who eat slower, tend to eat less. Aim to take at least 20 minutes to finish your meal.

## Eating out

In Canada and the United States, many people go out to eat frequently and not just for special occasions.

Many menu items from restaurants or fast food outlets will not likely contribute to body composition goals because:

- portion sizes tend to be larger
- ingredients that add taste usually don't contribute to overall health (fat, sugar, salt).

If you eat out more than twice per week – follow these tips:

1. **Share your meal.** This cuts the calories and added fat, sugar and salt in half. If you can't share – eat half and take the rest home.
2. **Choose water to drink or have only 1 drink.** If you are drinking alcohol try to keep the added sugars lower. For example vodka with soda water instead of vodka with a higher sugar mix, 5 oz of wine instead of the 9 oz glass.
3. **Skip appetizers and the bread basket.**
4. **Choose entrée items that are prepared with vegetables** – (aim for vegetables to make up ½ of your plate or bowl). If ordering a rice or vermicelli bowl, ask if you can reduce the rice or vermicelli and have more vegetables.
5. **Share a dessert** – or skip dessert.

## Reduce overall amount of refined grains in your diet.

Refined versus whole grain

**Refined:** Has had parts of the grain removed during processing. During the refining, typically the bran and most of the germ are removed. The bran and the germ are the parts that contain fibre and healthy fats and minerals.

**Whole:** A whole grain is made of bran, the germ and the endosperm.

Eating refined grains can lead you to eat more calories without as much fibre.



## Ways to reduce amount of refined grains

- Change your breakfast  
Instead of a muffin, bagel or English muffin—switch to oatmeal.
- Decrease how often you have sandwiches or subs for lunch, switch to chili or a salad with lean protein (chicken, fish, edamame, beans), or choose a rice bowl made with a lean protein, brown rice and vegetables.
- Choose 100% whole grain versions, quinoa or barley as a side instead of white pasta.
- Instead of granola bars for a snack, choose ¼ cup (60 mL) almonds, fresh fruit, or raw vegetables.
- Switch from white bread and bagels to: 100% whole grain bread, 100% whole grain crackers and 100% whole grain breakfast cereal. Examples of whole grain crackers include RyKrisp<sup>®</sup>, Triscuit<sup>®</sup>, Wasa<sup>®</sup>, Finn Crisp<sup>®</sup>.

## Meals

Aim to eat 3 meals per day. You may need to add a fourth meal if you are aiming to build muscle mass.

## Healthy Fat

Healthy fats for your body composition goals should be a part of every meal. Since the protein you choose should be lean, most of the fat you eat should come from healthy fat sources (ones that are primarily omega-3 and monounsaturated fat)



### Examples:

Nuts (walnuts, almonds)	Oils (canola, avocado, coconut)
Nut butters (almond, peanut or cashew)	Avocado
Seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, chia)	

No matter how healthy the fat having too much adds extra calories. Butter vs. margarine – choose either, but skip the margarine that is sold in a block

Since coconut oil is mainly saturated fat, do not use it as your main source of added fat.

## Drink branched chain amino acids on workout days,

Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. You need protein and amino acids for a lot of things – to help build immunity, to build muscle tissue, to make hormones, enzymes. There are two types: *essential* (you need to get from what you eat) and *non-essential* (your body can make).

The branched chain amino acids isoleucine, leucine, and valine are three essential amino acids. These amino acids are absorbed faster than others. They are helpful when your goals are to lose fat or to build muscle mass. They can be purchased as a supplement as tablets or as a powdered mix to add to water.

If purchasing the powder, check to see if you the amino acids you are buying have sugar substitutes or sugar as a sweetener. If you choose ones with added sugar, you will have to keep that in mind and reduce the carbohydrate or sugar you have from food or drinks.



Have about 1 scoop (5 g) of the powder and mix according to directions. Sip during or after your workout.

You can buy these at any supplement store that sells vitamins or sports nutrition supplements. You can also order them online - typically they are less expensive.



## Sleep

Sleep is restorative. It is the time your body needs for rest and repair. People who have adequate sleep tend to manage weight better.

### How?

Sleep 7–9 hours per night.

Tips for a great sleep:

- Turn off Smartphone, computer, TV about 1 hour before sleep.
- Keep your room as cool as possible.
- Keep your room as dark as possible. Use black out blinds.
- See more tips for sleep hygiene at: <http://sleepfoundation.org>



## Stress management through relaxation techniques

### Why?

Stress can cause or worsen the following: high blood pressure, anxiety, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic pain, pre-menstrual syndrome, depression, and hostility. Managing stress through relaxation techniques can help break the train of everyday thoughts. Participating in the following relaxation techniques brings a greater awareness to your thoughts.

### How?

Choose one of these techniques to relax: Start with 5–10 minutes a day.

- Meditate: Deep breaths in and out, focus on a positive thought, word or memory. If any other thought comes into your mind, acknowledge it, but go back to deep breathing and the positive thought.
- Pray.
- Take a walk in nature or in a garden. At the very least take a look at a book or web site with nature scenes.
- Be mindful in your activities. For example, if you are washing dishes or packing your lunch – pay active attention to the details. You could pay attention to the sound of the water splashing or the chopping sounds you are making when you are preparing vegetables.



## Summary

Before moving to Stage 2, the following Stage 1 habits should feel like a normal part of your life. Remember there is no such thing as perfection, just consistent healthy habits that help you to feel better.

- Majority of your food purchased from the grocery store has the least amount of processing.
- You enjoy your food and make an effort to eat slowly.
- You choose healthier items when going out to eat.
- You reduce the amount and number of times you eat refined grains.
- You choose healthy fats.
- You drink a branched chain amino acid drink during workouts.
- You sleep 7–9 hours a night.
- You incorporate stress reduction techniques in your life.

## Next steps

Once the above habits feel normal and are a part of your life, you are ready to fine-tune your food and drink choices. There are some items to purchase that can help with this – **food containers and measuring tools**. I am not recommending that everything you eat and drink needs to be weighed and/or measured. Measuring cups and weigh scales are meant to help increase your awareness of portion sizes. This is important because many people underestimate what they eat and drinks since we are either not mindful when we are eating or because we are used to seeing larger portion sizes in restaurants and in food advertisements.

**Buy food containers:** If you are looking to eat out less, and you don't work from home, get some food containers.

- Plastic containers (1 oz or ¼ cup for nuts)
- 250–500 mL containers for your leftovers or for salads
- sealable plastic bags for raw vegetables or cut up fruit
- a lunch bag to carry them in (there are stylish ones online!)

**Buy a scale and measuring cups and spoons:**

- digital scale
- measuring cups (the scoop kind)

These can be purchased at any major grocery store or places where kitchen appliances are stored.

## Stage 2: Fine tuning your food and drink choices

Welcome to stage 2! In this stage, we build on some of your healthy habits you developed in Stage 1 to benefit your body composition goals. You might have already started to notice changes, maybe your weight has come down, maybe you feel better, or are having more frequent bowel movements.

Remember to review your mission statement regularly as this will help reinforce the healthy behaviours.

### **Aim to eat 2 or less meals out per week.**

This can be challenging. If you eat lunch out almost every day – aim to pack your lunch at least one day. This is why it was recommended to purchase containers for your food if you don't have them.

There are healthy options available at a lot of restaurant and take-out places, however if you assembled the food yourself, you know exactly what is going in your meal.

### **Reduce added sugar, with a goal of eliminating added sugar.**

#### **A primer on sugar and carbohydrate:**

We need carbohydrate to perform in life and at the gym.

There are healthier types of carbohydrate. This nutrition guide emphasizes whole grains in a most natural state. It also encourages choosing plain fruit (apple versus sweetened apple sauce and dairy products (milk or yogurt instead of flavoured milk or sweetened yogurt). Fruit and milk are examples of food that have naturally occurring sugar in them.

The type of carbohydrate to **decrease** is the type that is **added** to foods during processing.

Contrary to what you might have heard, sugar is not 'toxic' or 'white death'. Eating large quantities of foods with added sugar are, put simply, bad for your health or body composition. Adding a lot of sugar to things helps improve flavour. This is not saying you can never eat birthday cake, a cookie or drink a Frappuccino<sup>®</sup>, Iced Cappuccino or hot chocolate again, but less is better for your health and body composition.

#### **Review your answers to [Self Test 2, Lifestyle Checklist Foods with Added Sugar](#).**

Take one of your answers where you identified that you have a food with added sugar a number of times a week and aim to decrease the frequency. For example, if you eat a breakfast cereal that has added sugar every day, switch to oatmeal or a cereal that does not have added sugar.

Cutting out sugar completely, works for some people, but for others cutting back gradually works better.

This can be a tough one for a lot of people, especially if you choose foods higher in sugar for comfort reasons or in times of stress. If you have a difficult time with cutting back on added sugar, take it easy on yourself. Maybe try another habit or get a great night's sleep, meditate and revisit your personal mission and try it another day or another week.

## **Switch from refined to whole grains (with most of your grains in their natural form).**

### **Why?**

In Stage 1, you reduced your intake of refined grains and increased your whole grains.

In Stage 2, look to have all your grains in the form closest to nature. Even though you may have switched to eating 100% whole grains and choosing whole grain crackers without added sugar, switching to the natural state boosts the nutrients even more. Nutrients in the least processed form are slower to digest and cause less of a spike in blood sugar.

### **How?**

Here are whole grains you can buy and cook in their natural form:

Amaranth, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, popcorn, quinoa

Sorghum, pot barley or whole grain barley, oats, wild rice and teff

## **Eat more vegetables than fruit**

**Suggested goal: Vegetables at each meal, 2–3 small pieces fruit per day.**

### **Why?**

Both vegetables and fruit are important for a healthy diet. They have vitamins, antioxidants and fibre. These can help reduce risk of some cancers, can reduce blood pressure and boost gut health. Fruit is sweeter than vegetables and tends to need less preparation and therefore you may be more likely to eat fruit more often than vegetables.



Examples that show that vegetables are lower in calories than fruit.

#### **Example 1**

1 cup (250 mL) cauliflower – 26 calories

1 cup (250 mL) blueberries – 87 calories

#### **Example 2**

1 cup (250 mL) chopped carrots – 55 calories

1 cup (250 mL) chopped apple – 69 calories

Pack raw vegetables/ raw fruit with you – see list of vegetables and fruit in Appendix 1: Food Lists.

### **Tips to eat more vegetables**

- Have washed, chopped, ready to eat vegetables in the fridge.
- Eat vegetables at each meal. Choose the lower carbohydrate ones. If you want the higher carbohydrate vegetables (these are identified in the *Appendix 1: Food Lists*), consider them as the *Grains* part on the *Healthy plate graphic* on the next page.
- Snack on vegetables when you feel like snacking but aren't hungry.

## What do your meals look like?

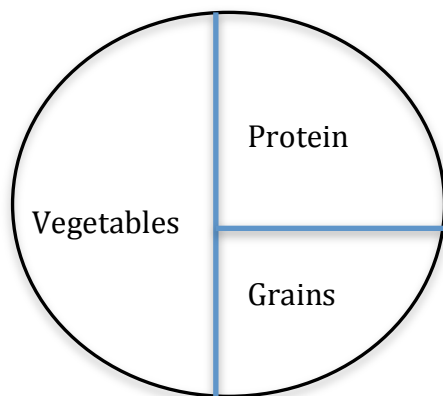
### How to build a healthy meal:

- Keep 50% of your plate vegetables
- Keep 25 % of your plate whole grains (bread, brown rice, or sweet potato)
- Keep 25% of your plate lean protein

Eat more vegetables than fruit

Reduce refined grains limit to once a week if you must have them

### Healthy plate graphic:



## Healthy Drinks

### 95% of the time choose water, tea or black coffee

**Why?** About 60% of your body weight is water. It's important to stay well hydrated.

Drinks with sugar and fat add a lot of calories quickly – this can add up without helping you to feel full.

Milk, fortified soy beverages, almond, rice, hemp or flax beverages are also healthy beverages; although they are healthy, some have naturally occurring or added sugars. Note that you need to track your portion size of these beverages.

Remember too, that not all of the above beverages are higher in protein – milk and soy beverages have higher protein, about 8 g per 8 oz (250 mL).



### How?

- A general guideline is to drink 9–12 cups of fluid per day. You will need to drink more if you exercise and if you are in a warmer climate.
- If you drink coffee or tea, limit the amount to about 3–4 8 oz (250 mL) cups per day.
- Don't rely on thirst as a guide to drink. When you are thirsty, you are slightly dehydrated. Not being well hydrated affects your exercise performance.

## Summary

Before moving to Stage 3, the following should feel like a comfortable part of your daily routine.

- You eat out two times per week or less.
- You have reduced added sugar in your diet, having them only on special occasions.
- You choose whole grains in their natural form.
- You eat more vegetables than fruit.
- You eat 3 meals per day and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your plate is vegetables.
- You choose water to drink and drink tea or coffee plain (if you drink tea or coffee) in the amounts recommended.

## Stage 3: Calorie and Macronutrient Targets

By working through the habits to get through Stages in 1 and 2, Stage 3 is not likely to be as challenging and you are likely closer to your body composition goals. If you haven't met your body composition goals, it may be time to start tracking your food and drink intake. Use an app or a website like <http://www.loseit.com> or <http://www.myfitnesspal.com>. Tracking your food and drink intake is important because most people forget the amounts of food they eat in a day and they underestimate how much they eat by up to 30%.

In this stage you calculate how many calories you need as well as how much fat, protein and carbohydrate you need.

### Step 1: Calorie needs (Basal Metabolic Rate or BMR):

#### Men (in kilocalorie/day)

$$=66.5 + (13.75 \times \text{weight in kilograms}) + (5 \times \text{height in centimeters}) - (6.76 \times \text{age in years})$$

$$=66.5 + (6.23 \times \text{weight in pounds}) + (12.7 \times \text{height in inches}) - (6.8 \times \text{age in years})$$

#### Women:

$$=655 + (9.56 \times \text{weight in kilograms}) + (1.85 \times \text{height in centimeters}) - (4.68 \times \text{age in years})$$

$$=655 + (4.35 \times \text{weight in pounds}) + (4.7 \times \text{height in inches}) - (4.7 \times \text{age in years})$$

There is an online calculator that you can link to here: [BMR Calculator](#)

### Step 2: Multiply your BMR x your level of activity:

To get an idea of how many calories you use a day, you have to multiply by an activity factor. Use the following to describe how active you are usually.

Sedentary:  $\text{BMR} \times 1.2$  – (little or no exercise)

Lightly active: (light exercise/sports 1-3 days/week)  $\text{BMR} \times 1.375$

Moderately active: (moderate exercise/sports 3-5 days/week)  $\text{BMR} \times 1.55$

Very active: (hard exercise/sports 6-7 days/week)  $\text{BMR} \times 1.725$

Extra active: (very hard exercise/sports & physical job or training 2 times per day)  $\text{BMR} \times 1.9$

### Step 3: Calories Fat loss or muscle gain:

#### Fat Loss

For fat loss, you need to be in a calorie deficit, take the calorie calculation from Step 2 and subtract 300-500 calories per day.

#### If muscle gain is your goal:

If you are a male with 25% body fat or more, or a female with 32% body fat or more, follow recommended calorie levels for fat loss. As your body fat percentage goes down, then you can add calories for muscle gain, if muscle gain is your goal.

#### Muscle gain:

Take calorie calculation from Step 2 and add 200-300 calories per day.



Example for Muscle gain: Male aged 43, Height 175 cm (5 10) Weight 81.8 kg (180 lbs)

$$66.5 + (13.75 \times 81.8) + (5 \times 175) - (6.76 \times 43)$$

$$66.5 + 1124 + 875 - 290 = 1775$$

Let's say he has 1.3 activity factor:  $1175 \times 1.3 = 2308$

Add 200- 300 calories per day 2508-2608 calories. Start with 2508 calories.

#### **Step 4: How much carbohydrate, protein and fat:**

Distribution of calories: carbohydrate (40% of calories), protein (30% of calories) and fat (30% of calories).

Note:

1 g carbohydrate = 4 calories

1 g protein = 4 calories

1 g fat = 9 calories

#### **Example:**

Calories needs: 2508

Carbohydrate: 40% of 2508 = 1003 calories from carbohydrate  $\div 4 = \mathbf{250\ g}$

Protein: 30% of 2508 = 752 calories from protein  $\div 4 = \mathbf{188\ g}$

Fat: 30% of 2508 = 752 from fat  $\div 9 = \mathbf{83\ g}$

For each of your meals, ensure you have at least 20 grams of protein at each meal.

## Appendix 1: Food Lists

Below is a list of foods to buy for your healthy plate. Add a healthy fat to each meal (either when cooking or when about to eat your meal).

### Food sources of protein:

Turkey (breast, leg, thigh)  
Chicken (breast, leg, thigh)  
Pork (loin, chop, sirloin, tenderloin, Canadian bacon)  
Beef (brisket, chuck, eye round, filet mignon, flank steak, ground (extra lean)  
Fish (mackerel, herring, salmon, sea bass, snapper, swordfish, tilapia, tuna, cod, shrimp, scallops, crab lobster, clams)  
Eggs, whole or egg whites  
Greek yogurt (non fat, 1% or 2%)  
Cottage cheese, (non fat, 1% or 2%)  
Tofu firm

Protein powder (although whole foods are encouraged, you get more nutrients from food than from supplements). Protein powders can be a convenient way to meet your protein needs. If you choose a vegetarian protein powder, like rice or hemp you will not be getting all the amino acids.



### Food sources of carbohydrate:

Grains (Barley – pearl, pot or hulled), brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, teff, millet, oatmeal, oat bran, wild rice, amaranth, quinoa, popcorn (plain), sprouted grain

Bread

Whole grain crackers

Beans (black, black-eyed, kidney, white, navy, lima, pinto) and lentils

Fruit:

Apple  
Apricot  
Cherries  
Cranberries (not dried)  
Grapefruit  
Grapes  
Honeydew melon  
Kiwi  
Mango  
Orange  
Peach  
Pear  
Pineapple  
Plum  
Raspberries  
Rhubarb  
Strawberries  
Watermelon

Vegetables (the following vegetables are higher in carbohydrate)

- Beets
- Carrot
- Corn
- Peas, green
- Potato, sweet or white
- Pumpkin
- Rutabaga
- Squash, summer
- Squash, winter

**Vegetables that do not have a lot of carbohydrate:**

- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Bok Choy
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage, green or red
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Collard greens
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Green beans
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Peppers
- Radish
- Spinach
- Tomato
- Watercress

**Healthy Fats**

- Avocado
- Nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecan, macadamia, walnut)
- Nut butters (the natural kind, not added salt, sugar or hydrogenated oil)
- Seeds (chia, hemp, flax, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower), tahini
- Oil (olive, canola, butter, olive , avocado, )

## Appendix 2: Sample Meal Plans

Sample meal plan days: with 40% calories from carbohydrate, 30% protein and 30% fat.

**For each meal plan drink 9-12 cups of fluid per day (green tea, black coffee count toward this). Aim for most of your fluid choices to be plain water.**

### 1500 calorie meal plan –

Breakfast:

¾ cup (175 mL) Greek yogurt 2% M.F.

½ cup (125 mL) berries

Snack:

1 cup (250 mL) raw cauliflower and sliced pepper

6 Tbsp (90 mL) hummus

Lunch:

1 ½ cup (375 mL) fresh spinach

4 oz (120 g) chicken breast

3 Tbsp (45 mL) reduced fat feta cheese

¼ medium avocado

½ cup (125 mL) cherry tomatoes

1 medium orange

Snack:

23 raw almonds

Supper:

20 medium shrimp

1 cup (250 mL) broccoli

½ cup (125 mL) brown rice or quinoa

1 cup (250 mL) skim milk or fortified unsweetened soy beverage

Snack:

1 medium apple

2 Tbsp (30 mL) almond butter

1498 calories 152 g carbohydrate (38.8%), 105.7 g protein (27%), 59.6 g fat (34.2%)

## **1800 calorie meal plan –**

### Breakfast:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup cooked oatmeal

2 boiled eggs

1 cup skim milk or fortified soy beverage

### Snack:

15 cashews or 23 almonds

1 medium apple

### Lunch:

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (375 mL) 2% cottage cheese

1 small banana or 1 small apple

6 cashews or walnuts

2 slices sprouted grain bread

### Dinner:

3 oz (90 g) baked or grilled salmon

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup (150 mL) quinoa

1 cup of Brussels sprouts broiled with oil

dessert:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) plain 2% M.F. yogurt and 125 mL frozen mixed berries

1810 calories 192.5 g carbohydrate (41.9%), 122.3 g protein (26.6%), 64.1 g fat (31.4%)

## **2000 calorie meal plan –**

### Breakfast:

1 cup cooked oatmeal  
1 scoop protein powder  
½ cup berries

### Snack:

2 oz tuna with 1 cup cucumber slices

### Lunch:

Chicken stir-fry  
4 oz chicken  
1 cup vegetables  
½ cup brown rice

### Supper:

4 oz broiled fish  
1 cup broiled yams  
1 cup sautéed kale  
1 cup skim milk or fortified soy beverage

Snack: ½ medium apple with 1 tbsp almond or natural peanut butter

2091 calories 239.1 g carbohydrate (44.7%), 130.3 g protein (24.4%), 59.6 g fat (30.9%)