The Basics of a Successful Meal Plan

**Disclaimer – I am NOT a doctor just a nerd with two science degrees (Human Biology, with a focus in Anatomy/physiology and Science nutrition and Psychology, with a focus in social and cognitive development) and an avid tutor/science mentor to university students. Weight loss IS a science; guessing will get us nowhere. So, I will pull from my vast knowledge of the body (physically and mentally) to support team MIFNYC with an EPIC lifestyle change for our readers.

The word "simple" is an overstatement. We all want that meal plan that involves no thought and minimal time so that we don't have to think about it, but diet automation will only come once you have taken the time to understand your body's nutritional and scientific needs. My advice before committing to this is – ASSESS YOUR DESIRE FOR CHANGE and TAKE IT ONE MEAL AT A TIME!

This meal plan will focus on the nutritional building blocks and the quantities that should be ingested based on your goals. By measuring quantities and not calories you will find that it is less stressful, will become automated faster and the calories will work themselves out.

This meal plan will be delivered in 8 stages weekly so that we do not get bogged down by all the details and can seamlessly apply this to our everyday chaotic lives.

Step 1 – Determine Your Goal

Do you want weight loss, gain or maintenance? Figuring out and creating a plan of what is needed to achieve any of these 3 goals is half the battle conquered! For the sake of this plan we will focus on weight loss but if you are looking to maintain your body mass or gain weight, reach out to us and we can create articles focused on those topics.

Weight Loss

More specifically – fat loss! We do not want to lose vital tissue mass. Losing weight too quickly will lead to muscle loss. Anything over 1% percent of your body weight will lead to muscle loss. But how do we know where to start based on where we are at in our fat loss journey?

Create a Calorie Baseline

Our goal for the first two weeks is to consume an isocaloric diet – one where our caloric input and output are the same.

There are many charts that will tell you on average what your baseline caloric intake should be so we will use that as a starting point and adjust accordingly. Assuming that most of our subscribers do not have a hard training schedule, we will look at caloric intakes for when you are sedentary and when you are engaging in moderate exercise. Keep in mind that there are varying ideas of what the multiplying factor should be to determine calories. We have used 13 for sedentary and 15 for moderate as a start. You will be able to adjust your intake accordingly from there until your weight stabilizes.

using the equation (BW) x (13 or 15)	Level of Exercise	Level of Exercise
Body Weight (BW) (in lbs)	No Exercise/Light Exercise (13)	Moderate Exercise (15)
125lbs	1625	1875
150lbs	1950	2250
175lbs	2275	2625
200lbs	2600	3000
225lbs	2925	3375
250lbs	3250	3750
275lbs	3575	4125
300lbs	3900	4500

Who is in shock at how "high" some of these numbers are? You would be surprised at what your body needs so that it can ensure all your bodies mechanisms are functioning properly. Don't forget these are also estimates and are to be adjusted until your body weight stabilizes.

Adjustments to Stabilize Weight in Week 1 &2

To help with visualizing how much protein, carbs or fats you should be eating our model will weigh 200lbs and require 2600 calories a day to support baseline.

Protein

There are 4 calories in each gram of protein. Our base standard amount of protein will by 0.8g/lb of lean body mass (LBM). To calculate this, you will need to know your body fat percentage. Our 200lb model has a body fat percentage of 39%, which means her LBM is 122lbs. She will require 0.8x122=97.6g of Protein a day.

Carbs

There are 4 calories in each gram of carbs. Our base standard number of carbs ranges from 0.5-1g/lb of LBM based on your activities. For the sake of simplicity, we will use 0.8/lb of LBM. This keeps it the same as your protein for now and makes measuring easier. Our model will require 0.8x122=97.6g of Carbs a day.

Fats

There are 9 calories in each gram of fats. Our base standard grams of fat will be – whatever calories are left after we have subtracted the calories of protein and carbs.

Getting our Numbers for week 1 & 2

For our 200lb model we have the following

- 97.6g of Protein – 97.6g x **4** = 390 calories
- 97.6g of Carbs – 97.6g x 4 = 390 calories
- 202g of Fat – 202g x 9 = 1820 calories

*Fat seems high, right? Do not be afraid of fats! Fats play a huge role in your body and we will be consuming healthy fats. Also, in week 3 we begin deducting calories for weight loss from fat before we touch carbs and proteins.

So now that we have our numbers, if you find that you are gaining or losing weight from this split then deduct or add 250 calories or roughly 28g of fat. Why fat? Because adding more protein does not make a difference to muscle growth and in the reverse, we don't want to eat less protein as it won't support muscle growth. Eating more carbs does not improve performance and can influence your bodies glycogen (sugar) storage. Eating less carbs can affect your brains ability to function and deplete energy. Fat is the choice because it is the healthiest to have in surplus for body composition (weird, right? Science I tell you!).

For now, I will leave you with all this mind-blowing information. It is a lot to digest all at once which is why you have 2 weeks. Let's do this together. This must be a lifestyle change as I am not in support of fast and furious weight loss leading to a definite derailing of your physical, mental and emotional balance.

Charlotte

Team Make It Fun NYC