

Nutrition Challenge Update: Week 5

02/16/2022

We're almost there! The challenge ends next Friday (2/25).

A couple action items for this week and next:

- Keep your checklist up to date. Turn these in at the front desk between Sat 2/26 & Fri 3/4.
- Sign-up for your 2nd InBody scan on the sheets in the lobby. Scans will run between Mon 2/21 & Fri / 3/4.

Adjusting Calories Again

It's been two weeks since we made our first calorie adjustments. If you're trying to lose fat and your weight has stalled, reduce your total daily calories by another 10%. Remember to keep your protein intake the same, and to remove these calories from your carb and fat intake.

The same can be applied to muscle gain by increasing calories in the same ratios.

If you need a refresher on how to increase or decrease your intake, our week 2 and week 4 updates are below:

[Week 2: Increasing / Decreasing Macros](#)

[Week 4: Leaving Room for Multiple Calorie Adjustments](#)

If you're using the **hand method**, adjust your carb and fat servings up or down by ½ meal (from your daily total).

Females:

- ½ cupped hand of carbs
- ½ thumb of fat

Males:

- 1 cupped hand of carbs
- 1 thumb of fat

If you're using the **plate method** there are a few ways you can adjust your intake up or down. Add or subtract a snack at some point of the day, switch to bigger or smaller plates / containers, and or simply be mindful about how much of your plate you're filling up. Still stick to our principles of balanced meals though - Protein, carbs, and fat every time you eat.

Feeling Hungry?

If you're reducing your calories it's not uncommon to be a little hungry. This is part of the process when you're losing fat. The good news is, if you're spacing meals consistently throughout the day, you're never too far away from your next meal or snack.

As your calories drop, it helps to eat lower density foods. These are foods that are lower in calories by volume.

Most vegetables and fruits fall in this category. So as your carb and fat servings get smaller, adding more vegetables to your meal will give you more food without adding many calories. Also, replacing starchy carbs (rice, potatoes, bread, pasta, etc) with fruit, will allow you to eat more volume but get the same amount of carbs.

Here's an example:

- 100 grams of cooked white rice = 29g net carbs
- 100 grams of apples = 11g net carbs

So it takes almost 3x the amount of apples by volume in order to get the same carb dose as rice.

Lastly, if you're trying to **gain muscle and you're increasing calories**, it's common to **feel full**. If you're struggling to get in all the calories you need, try the inverse of the cutting scenario above, and opt for more dense foods with your meals.

Food Quality & Slippery Slopes

Some diets work entirely off of principles of food quality. The Paleo Diet, Whole30, and other similar diets focus almost exclusively on eating select groups of whole foods and ruling out everything else categorically.

Practitioners often see some fat loss early on with these approaches because their calories drop significantly by way of switching to less dense whole foods and eliminating processed foods. We're supporters of any diet that gets you eating more whole foods, but these diets often ignore important elements of food **quantity**, and are often short-lived because of their restrictive nature.

On the flip side, you can still lose weight and/or gain muscle by focusing almost entirely on quantity. If calories and macros are controlled within a tight tolerance, food quality isn't as essential. The problem here is lower quality processed foods don't provide as many vitamins, minerals, or essential nutrients, and they can be much more of a slippery slope.

Most processed foods are super savory or sweet, they are less filling, and are very calorically dense. This keeps you coming back for more, and it makes it very easy to consume hundreds of additional calories without adding much food volume. Unknowingly consuming lots of additional calories from processed foods adds up quickly, and is eventually what leads to weight gain or fat accumulation for most people.

So the trick seems to be having a process that's focused *mostly* on whole foods, one that's not overly restrictive, and one that has some metric for quantity control.

This balance is different for everyone. Some people do better by ruling out some foods categorically, focusing mostly on quality, and only giving the quantity piece minor attention.

While others do better mastering their quantity / macro intake, and giving a little less attention to quality.

In past challenges we've focused more on the quality piece, this challenge we're giving more attention to the quantity piece. Our hope is that you'll gain a better understanding of how to manage your food quantity for fat loss and/or muscle gain, and that you'll be able to marry quality and quantity in a way that fits your goals and lifestyle.

Food Prep

We can't overstress how important it is to make food prep a weekly ritual. Even if you're struggling with calories or macro balance, simply having healthy options readily available will increase the percentage of balanced and nutritious meals you'll have throughout the week.

If you're getting tired of eating the same old things, try adding 1-2 new items to your food prep this week. If you're in need of ideas, check out this page with [Healthy Meal Prep Recipes](#)

Keep working toward making your nutrition a little better each week!

[Here's the link to our challenge resources page if you missed any content up to this point.](#)