

Update 2, New Year Challenge 2023

Challengers,

I hope you were able to make some steps toward eating healthier during our initial week. Here are the things you should have accomplished this week:

- Complete InBody Scan #1
- Complete a [Kitchen Clean Out](#)
- Pick-up (table in the lobby) or print out a [Challenge Tracking Sheet](#)
- Drink ½ your body weight in oz of water each day
- Check-in / record scores in Wodify - This is ⅓ of your challenge scoring

**If you weren't able to complete your InBody scan this week. Get to class 10-15 minutes early next week, ask a coach, and we'll get you scanned (for accuracy, scans have to be done before you workout).*

This coming week we'll get into the meat of the challenge.

It's important to complete a "healthy shopping" trip and get your first bulk meal prep done before Monday. This is when we'll start following the challenge guidelines and start keeping up with our challenge checklist.

****Please read through all the material below****

Rules to Follow

Below are some basic rules to follow during the challenge. Additional / more specific challenge guidelines can be found in the "Completing Your Tracking Sheet" section at the bottom of this update.

1. **Don't Drink Your Calories** - Zero or low calorie beverages only. If it exceeds more than 50 calories, stay away from it. The exception(s) would be a post workout shake (part of a meal), or a smoothie (a full meal). Water should make up the bulk of your hydration. Black coffee, tea, and zero calorie drinks like Lacroix and Zevia are good options for caffeinated or flavored drinks. Diet sodas are even okay. We just recommend keeping these to a few each week. Also, if you must have creamer with your coffee, go for a low-fat / low calorie option, and measure it - one tablespoon easily turns into two or three when you don't measure.
2. **Avoid Alcohol** - Alcohol slows digestion of other nutrients, and has a number of other negative health effects. Most alcoholic drinks are high in calories, and we tend to make poor nutrition choices when we drink. Outside of 1 or 2 special occasions, avoid alcohol during the challenge (we understand if it's your birthday or vacation). On these occasions, and beyond the challenge, practice moderation and opt for lower calorie alcoholic beverages.
3. **No Snacking** - Regardless of the calorie control method you select (more info below), we want you to get in the habit of eating 3-5 meals per day at consistent times. An extra 300-500 calories can easily sneak into your daily diet when snacking. Plus, most snack foods are not balanced and are low-quality processed calories. Eating balanced meals consistently throughout the day will help curb your desire to snack. Also, we want to get you OUT of the habit of mindless snacking. I've been in a bad habit of snacking after dinner lately. I'm eating enough at dinner, and I'm full enough, but it's more of an end of

the day reward thing. Eat your meal, then call it quits. Even if you're still a little hungry, you'll become more satiated 15-20 minutes after finishing a meal as your body starts the digestion process.

- 4. No Processed Seed Oils** - Avoid processed seed and vegetable oils like canola, palm, corn, cottonseed, soy, sunflower, safflower, and grapeseed. Cook lower heat items with olive oil, and higher heat items with avocado oil. Also, check the ingredient list of any packaged food you buy. Protein bars, nut butters, sauces, dressings, marinades, etc, often contain processed seed oils. You can find options that have olive, coconut, or avocado oil (all good) as their fat base. Just be sure to check the ingredient list when buying these items.
- 5. Eat Mostly Whole Foods. Minimize Processed Foods** - Shop the perimeter of the grocery store, this is where you'll find the produce, meat, and dairy. Avoid processed foods as much as possible - Chips, cereals, candy, granola bars, etc... Some healthy foods will be found down the center isles - Whole grains like oatmeal, rice, etc, but keep an eye on the ingredient list of pantry staples like nut butters and bread. Opt for nut butters with just nuts & salt. Practically all store-bought bread will have some form of sugar and processed flour. Just look for healthier / whole grain options and try to limit your servings to 1-2 slices a day. Protein bars are okay to have as well. Just look for options that use whey protein as their base, have at least 10g of protein, and limit protein bars to no more than 1 a day.
- 6. Limit Eating Out & Choose Healthy Options When Eating Out** - The more home-cooked meals you eat, the more likely you are to stay healthy and at a desired body composition for the long term. It's hard to eat healthy / balanced when you eat out. Practically all restaurant food will be made with some sort of processed seed oil along with added fat (in the form of butter, oil, sauce or dressing), and added sugar to help the flavor. When eating out, opt for salads with protein, or a dish that's mostly grilled meat and veggies. Get dressings on the side. This will help you limit your calories. Also, practice moderation. You can still enjoy a meal out without going overboard on your caloric intake.

Completing Your Tracking Sheet

Keeping up with your tracking sheet is an important part of the challenge. Have your tracking sheet with you, and fill out the corresponding sections as you read below. Then spend a minute or two at the end of each day to track your progress throughout the challenge.

Circle a Quantity Control Method

To lose weight or lose fat, you need to be in a caloric deficit - Burning more calories than you're taking in each day. To maintain your body composition, you need to eat roughly the same amount of calories you're burning. In either scenario, you need to practice some form of Quantity Control.

How many calories you burn each day is based largely on your body size and the amount of lean tissue you have. Two other big contributors are general daily activity and exercise. Beyond these factors, the amount of food you eat (look up 'thermic effect of food' to learn more), and the consistency of your daily calorie intake also play a role.

Your body likes consistency. When you give it enough quality protein, carbohydrate, and fat each day, this drives up your metabolism - putting you at your optimal level for recovery and burning calories.

On the flipside, if you're consistently eating too few calories, or going through big caloric swings from one day to the next, your metabolism slows, and your body is more likely to hold onto fat.

To achieve consistency and macronutrient balance, **choose one of the three options below and stick to it for the duration of the challenge:**

1. Plate Method

There are different versions of the plate method if you look it up online, but here's how ours will work. Eat 3-5x meals per day. Bigger meals if only 3. Smaller meals if 5. No snacking between meals. Each meal should consist of:

- A lean protein source covering $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate
- A veggie option covering up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate
- A fruit, whole grain, or starch option covering a $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate
- A healthy fat covering $\frac{1}{8}$ of your plate.

You shouldn't be overly hungry in between meals. If so, try adding a little more of each item above to your meals. If this makes your meals too big, try adding another meal to your day and evenly spacing them throughout.

2. Hand Method

Eat 4 meals per day. Use your hand to estimate portions of each macronutrient. [See here for a guide on how to use the Hand Method](#). This method is the "sweet spot" for many people. Giving them a little more accuracy than the plate method, but requiring less work and thus making it more sustainable than weighing and measuring.

3. Weighing & Measuring (aka Counting Macros)

This method gives you the most accuracy in terms of calories per day and macronutrient balance, but it requires the most effort. A rare few people have the want or need to track their intake all the time, but weighing & measuring periodically throughout the year can be a good exercise for most.

If you choose this method, here's how you'll calculate the calories and macronutrients you should aim for each day.

1. Find the **Base Metabolic Rate (BMR)** on your Inbody scan (right column).
2. Add 500-1000 calories to your BMR based on your average daily activity. See the levels below for your activity estimate:
 - a. **Lightly Active (add 500 cals)** - 10k steps or less per day, and your job / lifestyle requires you to be sitting most of the day.
 - b. **Moderately active (add 750 cals)** - 10k-15k steps per day, and your job / lifestyle requires you to be on your feet for approximately half the day.
 - c. **Highly Active (add 1000 cals)** - 15k + steps per day, and your job / lifestyle requires you to be on your feet most of the day.
3. Take your new total, and allocate 30% of your total calories to protein, 40% to carbohydrates, and 30% to fat.
4. Divide protein calories by 4, carbohydrate calories by 4, and fat calories by 9 to calculate your daily macronutrient prescription.

Here's an example of someone with a BMR of 1500 calories per day who falls under the light activity category:

Total Daily Caloric Burn		
BMR	1500	<i>calories per day</i>
Activity Adder	500	<i>calories per day</i>
Total Daily Burn	2000	<i>calories per day</i>

Protein, Carb, & Fat Calories Per Day		
Protein Calories, 30%	600	$2000 \times 0.3 = 600$
Carbohydrate Calories, 40%	800	$2000 \times 0.4 = 800$
Fat Calories, 30%	600	$2000 \times 0.3 = 600$

Daily Macronutrient Prescription		
Protein	150	$600 \text{ cal} / 4 = 150\text{g per day}$
Carbohydrate	200	$800 \text{ cal} / 4 = 200\text{g per day}$
Fat	67	$600 \text{ cal} / 9 = 67\text{g per day}$

If your plan is to weigh and measure, get your InBody Scan and a blank sheet of paper or a spreadsheet and get to work.

Once you've calculated your daily caloric burn and your macronutrient prescription, you'll need an app to track your intake.

We recommend the [Carbon App](#) or [MyFitnessPal](#) to track your intake. Both are somewhat easy to learn but will take some trial and error. Don't worry about using your app or tracking the first week. Just spend some time learning the app and how to weigh / measure.

One more essential if weighing & measuring will be a **food scale. If you don't already have one. You can find them at most retail stores or you can order one on Amazon.*

Write your Sleep Target

The ideal target for optimal health is 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. Sleep is a big factor in recovery, hormone regulation, and fat loss / retention. Look to improve your sleep during the challenge. Even if you can't hit 7-8 hours, an additional 30-60 minutes each night can go a long way. Here are few tips to help optimize your sleep patterns and improve the quality of your sleep:

- Have a consistent sleep and wake time most nights of the week.
- Keep your bedroom cool and completely dark.
- Minimize screen time within an hour of going to bed.
- Get most of your hydration in the morning and afternoon to prevent trips to the restroom overnight.

Weekly Meal Prep

Much of the challenge centers around completing a good bulk meal prep each week. Improvements in food quality, macronutrient balance, and quantity control will only happen if you have healthy food readily available during the week.

Complete your first bulk meal prep before this coming Monday, and check the corresponding box / week in the **“Weekly Meal Prep”** chart at the top of your tracking sheet.

Prepping single ingredient items (ex. Grilled chicken for protein, a big pot of rice for carbs, etc) will be easier when starting off. This way your prepped items will consist of mostly one macronutrient, making it easier to build balanced meals and to track your intake if weighing / measuring. If you’re making a recipe with several ingredients, it’s hard to get an idea of how much protein, carb, and fat ends up in each serving.

[Reference last week’s update](#) if you need more guidance on how to complete healthy shopping and meal prep.

Daily Checklist - Quality, Quantity, Water, & Sleep

At the end of each day, mark a check or an X for each of the categories below:

- Quality - Did you stick to the basic challenge rules outlined at the beginning of this update?
- Quantity - Did you stick to the quantity control method you chose for the entire day?
- Water - Did you drink half your bodyweight in ounces of water that day?
- Sleep - Did you hit the sleep target goal you listed on your tracking sheet?

**For sleep, use the hours you slept the night prior. Example - Sunday night to Monday morning should be recorded in the Monday 1/23 sleep box.*

Write your minutes in Zone 2 at the end of each week.

Zone 2 training is the lowest heart rate zone used for training purposes. It’s great for caloric burn, building your conditioning base, and most importantly, longevity. Most of what we do at the gym puts you into higher Zones (3 through 5) which have other health benefits, but from an exercise perspective, Zone 2 is probably the biggest missing piece for most of us.

If you want to learn more about Zone 2 training, [listen to this 7 minute clip](#) from MD and longevity expert Peter Attia.

If you listen to the clip, Attia discusses using a lactate meter to measure when he’s in Zone 2. For purposes of the challenge, we’re going to use **heart rate** as a correlate. **Your goal is to be at 120-135 beats per minute** during your **“Minutes in Zone 2”** listed on our tracking sheet.

Attia also recommends getting 2 to 4 hours of Zone 2 training each week. You’ll be in Zone 2 during *some* of your time in class, so we’ll assume you’re already banking roughly an hour of Zone 2 time in class each week.

For the challenge, we’ll be recording **minutes spent in Zone 2 outside of class** at the end of each week. The minimum requirements for each week are below. You can go beyond the minimums if desired, and your Zone 2 minutes can be split into as many sessions as desired (ex. A 20 min session, 3x / week, to total 60 min for the week).

Zone 2, Minimum Weekly Requirements:

Week 1 - 30 min

Week 2 - 45 min

Week 3 - 60 min

Week 4 - 75 min

Week 5 - 90 min

You can use a traditional chest strap heart rate monitor, an Apple watch, any fitness tracker, or a manual pulse measurement on your wrist or neck to check your heart rate during Zone 2 exercise.

**I prefer the neck if taking a manual pulse - two fingers pressed just below the jaw. IMO it's easier to pick-up your pulse here.*

During the first two weeks, check your heart rate every 5 min. If you're manually counting your pulse. use your phone, watch, or a wall timer, and count how many times your heart beats in 10 sec; then multiply by 6 to get your beats per minute.

If you're below 120-135 bpm, increase your pace / intensity. If you're above 120-135, decrease your pace / intensity.

We don't want this to be too complicated. After a week or 2 of checking your heart rate every 5 min, reduce it to checking every 10 min. You should eventually get to a point where you can feel whether or not you're in Zone 2 just by your level of effort and how hard you're breathing.

Here's a **list of ideas to use for Zone 2 training**, but be creative - Anything that gets your heart rate in the 120-135 range for an extended period will work:

- Brisk Walk or Easy Run - Outdoors or treadmill
- Hiking
- Rucking - Walking or hiking with a weighted backpack or weighted vest
- Rowing
- Air Bike
- Ski Erg
- Sled Drags (lighter weight, 25-70#)
- Various sports / games (basketball, tennis, ultimate frisbee, etc)
- Lower intensity circuit workouts (ex. EMOM of rowing, biking, skiing, step-ups, burpees, etc).

Now get to work on your tracking sheet and food prep, remember to check-in to class and record your scores, and let me know if you have any questions! I'll send out our next update on Friday 1/27.